

JEEVADHARA

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION

MAN'S PLACE IN THE WORLD

IS MAN THE "RESULT" OF EVOLUTION?

Jan Van der Veken

TOWARDS A DYNAMIC CONCEPTION OF MAN

André Cloots

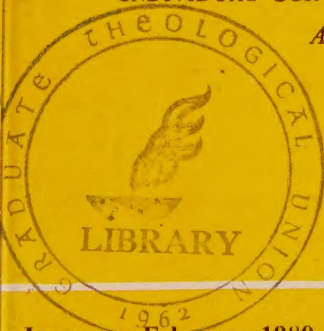
LORD OR PARTNER OF THE WORLD? ON THE NEED FOR A NEW
VISION OF MAN-WORLD RELATIONSHIP

John Arakkal

JUL 7 1980

LIFE 'AFTER' DEATH:
INDIVIDUAL SURVIVAL OR UNIVERSAL COMMUNION?

Abraham Koothottil



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JEEVADHARA

The Problem of Man

MAN'S PLACE IN THE WORLD

Editor:

Abraham Koothottil

Associate Editor:

Thomas Vellilamthadam

Theology Centre
Kottayam - 686 017
Kerala, India

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Editorial

There is a saying that philosophy bakes no bread. It may be true that the relevance of speculative thought to life is not immediately evident. However, without a certain disengagement from the immediate concerns and recourse to a wider generality of thought we cannot relate together the many insights we gain through experience. Only thus can we reach a deeper, more comprehensive, understanding of reality, which is essential for the coordination and advancement of life and experience. We know also how on the global level ideas and ideologies influence the course of history and mould civilizations. Hence an understanding and appraisal of history and civilizations have to take into account also the underlying ideologies and world views on that level.

This explains the general philosophical tone of this issue of *Jeevadhara* which once again focuses on man as he stands in relation to the world, attempting to understand this late comer in the universe from a wider and more integral perspective, as a dynamic reality, essentially related to the world in origin and becoming as well as in responsibility and fulfilment. As such the theme is not very new, but there is novelty in the way each of the writers locates the human being within the cosmic totality. In fact, many trends of thought, in philosophy, theology and in natural sciences, which shaped the attitudes of large sections of mankind for centuries have been so man-oriented and man-centred that they led to harmful ideologies and unwholesome practices, creating thus a number of problems that confront man and the other beings that share this world with man. Hence it is well in place that this issue of *Jeevadhara* joins hands with those who look for an alternative and a more wholesome understanding of man, integrating his reality as well as his claims and hopes, into the perspective of totality.

But should the pendulum now swing to the other side? Is man just a 'happy accident' on a lost planet? Similar views seem to gain ground in some circles today. Well aware of this,

Jan Van der Veken examines man's case as to whether he is the unintended and unwanted result of sheer chance, or whether there is a sense in speaking of a direction of evolution ascending gradually and resulting in man. After examining the standpoints of teleologists and their opponents, Van der Veken decides for a position in-between: "*more* can be said than a dialectical materialist would admit and *less* than a traditional theist would have it".

Whatever be the diversity of opinions in interpreting the evolution of life, one thing is clear: man is rooted in, and related to, the world to which he owes his being - a basic insight which no serious anthropology can overlook today. This insight receives a philosophical rendering in the article of André Cloots, which is an attempt to spell out some important aspects of a dynamic concept of man, integrating "being and becoming, change and identity, individuality and relatedness" and trying thereby to overcome the dualistic views in anthropology. The change of perspective in this conception of man becomes more pronounced in the concluding reflections on 'Beauty and Peace' as the meaning and aim of life and endeavour.

That this dynamic conception of the human being is a break from the main trends of Western anthropology is clear enough. In outlook and attitude, in faith and practice, the West especially has a long history of anthropocentrism. John Arakkal shows the need for a critical overcoming of this anthropocentrism from the questionable premises on which it is based as well as from the alienating consequences it has for both human and non-human beings. In the final and more constructive part of his study he pleads for a relationship of solidarity with, and a partnerlike attitude towards, the non-human realities. This would require a radical revision of the present day economic practices and technological pursuits in favour of a more humane and ethical mode of technology and economy.

In the last article of this issue Abraham Koothottil deals with the question of man's immortality from the point of view of an anthropology of solidarity. He contends that man's essential relatedness with the whole of reality including God implies and secures the imperishability of human personality and that, there-

fore, immortality in terms of an ongoing life in another realm as if one could somehow escape the reality of death is to be seen more as an extension of a certain anthropocentrism than as an objective statement of how one's fate is going to be in the face of death. It is thus shown that in the final fulfilment too, the imperishable human being is essentially related to the whole of reality, a point that is understandable within the frame-work of a dynamic anthropology and an organic cosmology. From this point of view the writer aims at reaching more clarity and precision in reinterpreting the eschatological doctrine of Christianity.

The articles presented in this issue focus attention on what could in fact be said regarding the problem complex or situation on the basis of our present knowledge and experience. They seek to reach a closer approximation to truth, the way how things are or should be, without claiming to be the last word on the matter.

Theology Centre
Kottayam 686017
India

Abraham Koothottil

Is Man the "Result" of Evolution?

"We may be afraid of chance,
but God need not be afraid even of that."
Ch. Hartshorne, *A Natural Theology for
Our Time*, p. 92.

It is an established fact: the planet earth originated some 4,600,000,000 years ago. Life, in its earlier forms, appeared three to four billion years from now. Some micro-organisms are evolving during a period of about 4 billion years. The total period of formation of the earth until the first undisputable traces of life is 1 1/2 billion years.

The first upright form of human life appeared ca. 6,000,000 years ago (*Australopithecus*), the first man who fabricated purposively instruments 3,000,000 years ago (*Homo habilis*), the first man who used fire (*Pithecanthropus*) 1,900,000 years ago. It is only ca. 100,000 years since man buried his dead (*Neandertal*) and only 40,000 years since the Cro-Magnon man produced real cultural objects.

Adjustments in detail are possible, but it is certain that never before we knew as many factual data about the origin of life and man on our planet as today.

Yet, on the other hand, the explosion of knowledge has in no way clarified the most important question: what is the place of man in the cosmos? Has he any place at all? There seems to be an important gap between the facts, which are public and known to all, and the overall interpretation of those facts, which is very diverse and often contradictory.

In order to avoid tackling too many questions at once, I would like to concentrate on this question: in which sense, if any, is man the result of evolution?

A distinction imposes itself: "to be the result" can mean: to be the outcome, the last phase, of a long process. If this is

what you mean by result, then there can be little doubt about the fact that man is, indeed, the outcome of a long process of evolution. Man is a newcomer amongst the living beings on earth, and he surely has not created himself. A long pre-biological and biological preparation was required. We can trace the development which in fact gave rise to the growth of the nervous system and the gathering volume of the brain, and these are without doubt necessary conditions for the appearance of reflexive consciousness and intellectual life on earth.

But the question can have another meaning: has man been *intended*? Is he the result of a plan, a project, a desire or even an act of love? This is a rather different meaning of "being the result" of evolution. It is not just a question of facts; it is a question of meaning.

If you answer that question with: "Yes, I do believe that man is somehow intended by the evolutionary process", you are not yet a God-believer or a theist. Other interpretations are still open: maybe, man is only the result of a blind and necessary evolutionary process, rooted in the very nature of matter, as a dialectical materialist would put it. Both theists and materialists accept that life on earth is not just an accident, but rooted in the very nature of reality. With regard to the probability of life on earth, theists and materialists are in the same boat.

On the other hand, if you exclude all design or purpose, or even built-in processes in the very nature of matter, the only option which remains open is an explanation of the origin and evolution of life by chance. A recent proponent of this doctrine is Jacques Monod (+ 1976), a microbiologist and Nobel prize winner, who published in 1970 his much debated book, *Le Hasard et la Nécessité*.¹ Jacques Monod is a representative of a full blown mechanistic materialism. He opposes his interpretation of the mechanisms of the origin and evolution of life to both Teilhard de Chardin and dialectical materialism.

1) Jacques Monod, *Le hasard et la nécessité. Essai sur la philosophie naturelle de la biologie moderne*, Paris, Seuil, 1970. A less controversial work which contains similar views is François Jacob, *La Logique du vivant*, Paris, Gallimard, 1970.

It is enough for our purpose to limit ourselves to this two very different answers to our question: in what sense is man the result of evolution?

Teilhard de Chardin takes his starting point from paleontology: he intends to be a scientist and to allow the phenomena to speak for themselves: "the phenomenon of man": nothing else than the phenomenon, but the whole phenomenon. As all scientists, he is not content with a sheer enumeration of facts. He intends to discover their inner coherence. What Teilhard calls "the law of complexification" allows him *to understand the facts*: he sees in the evolutionary process a dynamism at work which tends towards more complex and for that reason higher organisms. Very naturally Teilhard can understand the evolutionary process as directed towards the production of man. Man, in this view, is not a matter of chance, but the outcome of a long process. Monod, on the other hand, claims that not evolution but "invariance" (invariant reproduction) is the most essential feature of all living beings. The most striking feature of a living being is that it is able to reproduce itself. The amount of information, necessary for this reproductive process, is contained within the nucleus of each cell. This information is, so to say, the building-plan. It is expressed in a kind of language, which is the DNA. In a language or "code", made out of a very limited number of aminoacids, the whole very complicated process necessary for the reproduction of a new exemplar of the same species is expressed. It is transmitted from one generation to another, in an unchanged way. Not evolution, but non-evolution seems to Monod to be the very characteristic of life.

Another characteristic feature of living beings, according to Monod, is that they manifest a project in their structure and in their performances. This feature he calls teleonomy. Until recently, scientific biology was very much opposed to the recognition of finality. "Do the birds fly because they have wings, or do they have wings in order to fly?" was a much quoted question. Most of the biologists would have answered: they fly because they have wings. The performance *follow from* the structure. Biology is anti-finalistic, it has been claimed many times. Monod seems to contradict this well established position

in the scientific world. It is impossible, says Monod, to understand a photographic camera without taking into account the project which explains its structure and its functioning. If that is so, and no one can deny it, why should the same not apply to the eye? You cannot understand an eye without taking into account the project which it demonstrates in its structure and in its way of functioning. And, to be sure, it is the same project which explains the camera and the eye. At first sight, this is a very daring statement for a representative of scientific biology.

But attention please! Monod's contention is that what applies to individual living beings does not apply to Nature as a whole. Nature is not teleonomic (or finalistic). Monod refuses absolutely to interpret the origin of life in function of a project ("telos", in Greek). There is no dynamism in the evolutionary process, no driving force towards the higher forms of life. Hence the only solution which remains open is the acceptance of chance: the whole intricate mechanism of living organisms, their remarkable variety, the instincts with their amazing adaptation to very complex situations, *can be nothing else* than the result of chance.

How and why is it that Monod assigns himself this almost impossible task to explain everything as the result of chance? His answer is clear: the "postulate of objectivity" compels him to exclude as leading towards possible explanation all reasons given in terms of a project (or final causes). Monod recognizes that this is indeed a postulate. It is for ever unprovable. But it is the basis of scientific method itself. Although he feels compelled to accept the existence of a project or teleonomic activity on the level of individual living beings, with regard to the explanation of evolution as a whole, Monod is as anti-finalistic as positivistic biology ever has been.

Of course, in order to be fair to Monod, one should explain the whole mechanism which Monod thinks is responsible for the evolutionary process: as a micro-biologist he focuses his attention on mutations which occur in cell-cultures. Most of the mutations are harmful. By chance, however, some mutations *may be* productive of new features, which allow the living being in which they occur, to adapt itself in a better way to the cir-

cumstances in its environment. Its descendants, when they happen to inherit the same features, will also inherit the new adaptive quality. It follows from there that they will be better adapted than the other individuals of the same species, which have not inherited that new quality.

One advantage of the extreme position of Monod is that it helps to answer our question ("In which sense is man the result of evolution?") more carefully than we would have done, if there were not the attempt to explain the origin and evolution of life by chance.

The origin of man is not predictable

Looking at the evolution and the origin of the human species *from the beginning* or starting point of the formation of this planet, I think that there are not enough reasons to say, scientifically speaking, that man (or human-like life) had to emerge. Looking at the outcome of evolution from the standpoint of the antecedent factors, which is the standpoint of science, man is a very improbable being. Yet, he has emerged in fact. Limiting oneself to the assignable causes—what a scientist should do—it is very well possible that man would not have emerged at all. Here Monod is right. From the point of view of scientific explanation it can be maintained that man was not necessary at all. And you can say that what is not necessary happens by chance. Of course, the fact remains that matter must be accepted as a given, even by a materialist, and that it has to have some properties. In this sense, there is always more than just chance.

From the point of view of the outcome

From the point of view of the result of the evolution which has in fact happened, i. e., *post factum*, it cannot be denied that everything has in fact collaborated to give rise to the very improbable human species. A factual orientation towards higher organisms with a more complex nervous system is undeniable. This is the force of Teilhard's "law of complexity": it is a fact that ever more complex organisms have emerged, and that man is the most complex being of all (as far as we know, at least on this planet).

Probability and chance are opposed to one another. If it could be proved that there are in fact mechanisms at work which make the origin of life probable, the explanation by chance would be less and less convincing. It is our conviction that there are, in fact, enough factors which have encouraged the origin of life and the evolution towards its higher forms, to allow us to talk about an anti-chance factor in the universe.

To begin with, it is an established fact that, given certain atmospheric and chemical conditions, which are very akin to those circumstances which were very probably there at the earlier stages of the formation of the planet, it is rather likely that some amino-acids, essential for the fabric of life, will be produced (the Oparin-Haldane hypothesis, verified experimentally by Stanley Miller, of Berkeley). If it is *likely* that some combinations result, an anti-chance factor is at work.

The earlier forms of life seem to be older than we thought previously. This means that there was less time available for the production of the essential elements of life. Less time means that it is more difficult to explain everything by chance alone. Everything happened too fast, to allow for the accumulation of "happy chances". And the accumulation of "happy chances" itself forms a problem: there should be a mechanism which "retains" the good results of an evolutionary process, even if it originated by chance. Chance all by itself cannot explain why *some* mutations are fatal, others neutral and a third kind real factors in the evolution. The way in which chance-events are integrated in the life process are as essential as the mutations by chance themselves. Indeed, such a mechanism which retains the "happy results of chance" has to evaluate the mutations, and to decide what to retain and what to reject. It may be very well the case that such a mechanism is not flawless, and that monsters originate from unhappy mutations, but that makes it even harder to explain the upward trend in evolution without the acceptance of any "built-in choice mechanism" at all. And choice means anti-chance.

It must be said that chance is a very ambiguous word. The problem is that everything which is not logically impossible could be the result of chance. Maybe, the letters are coming on

this paper only because I am typing at random. That is not logically contradictory, hence possible. But it is not a reasonable supposition. Too many happy chances would have to occur to make even one line possible that way. And all the happy chances would have to occur at the same line, i.e., within a limited amount of time and space. Of course, the time and space in which the formation of life occurred is immense, but not unlimited. Chance operates only within certain limits and in a certain amount of space. You cannot stretch chance infinitely. The amount of matter (at the surface of the earth) is rather too limited to allow for chance to play an all-explanatory role.

There are other features of evolution which cannot too easily be explained by chance alone; the fact that evolution is not chaotic, and that there is urge towards higher or more integrated kinds of beings is undeniable. Of course, "urge" is an interpretative word, but can it be avoided? On the basis of the known facts one has to recognize that the evolution of the nervous system, e.g., is continuous, one-directional, and realized in an ever faster way. However, one should not overlook the fact that there are also dead branches on the tree of life. Yet, the factual line (unicellular organisms, more complex cellular organism, insects, fishes, amphibians, mammals, primates, man) can easily be reconstructed. There may be divergences of opinion about the details, but the general line is clear.

There seem to be, then, many compelling reasons to say that as a whole the evolution on planet earth did not happen in a chaotic way. Order, the ascent of life, more complex nervous systems: all this cannot be explained by chance alone.

Yet, it is important not to cry victory too readily. What has been proved (or almost proved) by the most recent developments of evolutionary theory is that there are in fact mechanisms at work which encourage the origin of life and even of its higher forms. In this sense, neither life nor man is the result of sheer chance. Given the propitious circumstances, the origin of life and even the evolution towards its higher forms is essentially predictable. But to think that the evolution has also been *intended* is quite a different question. Let us call this kind of finality *intended* finality (or finality of intention, finalité d'inten-

tion). Now the question is whether there is an intention at work in evolution, and not just a factual orientation.

Although there are many indications in the evolutionary process for an intention at work, one should be prudent and decide the matter on other grounds than merely scientific ones. Different *interpretations* of the *de facto* evolutionary process are possible. A materialist will claim that matter itself possesses all the built-in features to produce all forms of life. However, most of the materialists are opposed to a too simplistic form of materialism (e.g. the mechanistic materialism of Lamettrie). They call themselves "dialectical materialists". They talk about "dialectical jumps", quantitative processes which give rise to qualitative differences and so on. They admit that a narrow form of materialism (so-called mechanistic materialism) is not able to account for the higher stages of evolution.

A theist may find in the prodigious facts of evolution an indication that some divine Force is at work. That would be a new version of Aquinas' fifth way to God (the argument from design). But others like Albert Schweitzer will feel inclined to write Life itself with a capital.

My position is that *more* can be said than a dialectical materialist would admit, and *less* than a traditional theist would have it.

To the dialectical materialist I would say: if matter and its built-in processes are so complex, so powerful, so inventive as to give rise to such qualitatively rich results, then the word matter is badly chosen, and in fact misleading. If your conception of matter is such that it would really allow you to explain something, you have to "stretch" the meaning of matter in such a way that you are no real "matter"-ialist.

To the traditional theist I would say: I agree with you that the argument from design proves something; chance, indeed, cannot be the whole story. But what does the argument prove exactly? That there is an all-powerful and benevolent God who has made the universe according to His pre-established plan? There seems to be too much sheer contingency at work in the

evolutionary process to allow for a "great architect of the universe", such as accepted by Voltaire and other deists.

Teilhard's world view integrates many data, and contains many valuable elements. But as an overall picture of reality it is too imaginative and also too optimistic to be really convincing. Everything fits in it (or almost everything, even the pain of growth). Teilhard's universe is more harmonious than the one we live in.

We do need a position in-between which would account for general purpose as well as contingency in detail, for immanent processes as well as overall adjustment of attainment. It seems to me that the process-view on reality provides such an in-between position. I mean the type of world view based on the thought of A. N. Whitehead. It is clear that Whitehead himself is more a physicist than a biologist, but I think that it is rather easy to integrate the data of contemporary evolutionary theory in a process-view on reality as a whole.

The decisive advantage of process theism over against the traditional theism is that the overall result of the evolution is not just the achievement of *one*, all powerful, divine will. Evolution is rather the outcome of myriads of "events" which have all contributed in their own little way to produce that splendid result we call "life". There is an upward trend in the universe, but there is also conflict and decay. The final result, in its detail, is not the outcome of one single will or the realization of one single Purposive Agent. But there is a "lure" at work in the universe, and even more clearly in the evolutionary process - a lure towards ever new forms of harmony, new and more integrated "wholes" (societies). There is in the universe what Whitehead calls a "lure for feeling, the eternal urge of desire"²; all entities, all events are invited to be their best selves, to contribute to the ongoing process, to act and to receive, to interact. The decisive advantage of this vision on the creative process is that God is inviting, not imposing. He is *not* the "supreme author of the play"; "to Him must not be

2) Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality. An Essay in Cosmology*, New York, Macmillan, 1929, p. 522.

ascribed its shortcomings as well as its successes". "It stands in His very nature to divide the Good from the Evil".³ Things could be otherwise. We are not living in the best of all worlds. The achievement of order, i.e., of diversity in harmony, which is beauty, depends also upon the collaboration of every cell, every single animal, every human being, and of course, upon the all-encompassing presence of the Great Companion who loves all events (i. e., lures them towards becoming their best selves), which in their immense variety constitute the world.

Is man alone in the universe?

If there is an urge in the universe towards the realization of more complex organisms, then it is also plausible that the adventure of life is not limited to this planet. It goes without saying that at the moment no one can decide this question on factual grounds. Yet, it is not meaningless to ask whether it is plausible or probable that there are other evolved organisms in the universe. It is a question which has also a philosophical relevance, because the answer we give to that question reveals something about the way we conceive the universe in which we live.

After the adjudication of the Nobel prizes, a press conference is organized. More than once I have heard on television the interviewer asking: "Do you think that there is life (or something which can be compared with it) on other planets?" An important majority of the answers is positive. What does that reveal? Do Nobel prize winners have special information about extra-terrestrial states of affairs? Clearly not. But the answer you give to the question: "Do you think that there is life on other planets?" tells a lot about the way you think about life on *this* planet.

If your answer is: "No, I am almost sure that there is no life on other planets", you have said, by implication, that you feel that there is no real reason why there should be life on any

3) Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, New York, Free Press, 1967, p. 179

planet at all. *If* you say: Yes, I think that it is very probable that there is also life on other planets, given the same initial circumstances, you have already said, by the same token, that you feel that there is in the universe a dynamism at work—however conceived—which fosters life and makes it probable, not just elsewhere, but also on this planet.

As if

It is safe to say that everything on this planet has conspired *as if* life was the intended outcome. The *as if* contains the aporia or deadlock of our factual and scientific knowledge.

It is also safe to think that *some* forms of life or at least some pre-biological formations are very likely to occur also elsewhere in the universe because of the immense probability that the same or comparable circumstances as present on this planet, at least at the period of its formation, could also be present elsewhere. In this probability the hope is expressed that the presence of life is not just an accident but that life is at the very heart of the universe. If this is true, we are not the result of chance but are somehow “intended”, even if we have to recognize that this intention is more complex, and far more open, than the traditional argument of design would have it.

The universe is not less than the result of the plan of an almighty “grand architect”. It is rather more; it is the result of the interaction of myriads and myriads of acting agents, held together in one mighty vision of Harmony, which is directed towards Beauty, which transpires in all that is, and yet is never fully realized.

Tiensestraat 112
3000 Leuven, Belgium

Jan Van der Veken

Towards a Dynamic Conception of Man

To be a human being is to become it. Human existence is a search for self-realization, for meaningfulness. What it means concretely to be a human being is never totally given *a priori*: man has to discover it underway, in accomplishing it. What life is, only life can tell us.

Through the centuries, man has had to experience time and again, that to be a human being is something dynamic: it is a process, occupying our whole life, from birth to death. Man is not a purely self-identical being. And he has known that always. Nevertheless, especially Western thought has had difficulties in integrating becoming and change. The awareness of the permanent has been overwhelming, partly at least because of the notion of 'substance', especially as this notion has been functioning in the tradition: more than once becoming and change were considered to be accidental, purely contingent, peripheral and sometimes even unimportant. Nowadays, however, from different perspectives – from physics as well as from psychoanalysis – the insight grows that becoming and change are really essential aspects of man. The basic problem is to think together being *and* becoming, fluency *and* permanence. "To be" is always an activity, but more than any other being, man has to realize himself, and he has to do this in relation with others, in ever changing circumstances.

In affirming all this, we touch at the same time another problem concerning the human being (and also concerning the idea of substance). To become human is not a purely individual process, but a social one. The starting-point of existential phenomenology (Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty) is the insight that to be human means: to be in the world together with others. A human being realizes itself in relation to the world and to others. Here, too, the notion of 'substance' at least requires

adequate qualifications: is man such that he does not need anything else (except God) in order to exist, as Descartes defines a substance?¹

Being and becoming, change and identity, individuality and relatedness: all these are essential polarities for a philosophical anthropology. Never can the aim be to obscure one of the poles. But the problem is how to keep them together. Man becomes what he is, in relation to what he is not: this, a philosophic anthropology should try to think in a systematic way.

In the problem of change (and becoming), however, as well as in the problem of man's relatedness to what he is not, immediately another concept is at stake, viz. the concept of the self: the self within change, the self within a radical relatedness. Maybe we too readily consider the 'self' to be something at variance with change, over against it, differing from it - and this may apply to several interpretations of the Western notion of substance, as well as to several forms of the Eastern 'no-self'-theory. The question is whether this is the right way to put the problem. Is man what he is *in spite of* change, or rather *thanks to* it - in spite of the relatedness to what he is not, or on the ground of it? The philosophical current now called "process philosophy" - having as its founding-fathers Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshornê - furnishes a new model to think all this. Their insights are the basic inspiration for the rest of this article.

I. Our bodily existence

The age-old distinction between the body and the soul has often ended in a real separation between both: from Plato, over Descartes up to now, dualism has been appearing again and again, in some form or other. Not surprisingly, because the status of

1. See R. Descartes, *Principia Philosophiae*, part I, 51. It should be noted, however, that during the centuries quite differing definitions of "substance" have been given. Leibniz e. g. writes, in the beginning of his *Principes de la Nature et de la Grâce Fondés en Raison* that a "substance" is "a being capable of activity."

the body and the relation between me and my body is one of the most difficult problems in every philosophical anthropology. In certain respects, the body is part of nature. But it is also part of myself. My existence is a bodily existence. On the other hand, I am more than my body: I cannot be confined to it. But what does all this actually mean?

From a superficial point of view, the body is really a part of nature, as much as anything else is. It is subject to the laws of mechanics, to growth and decay, to the iron law of temporality and spatiality. The body is material, and thereby extended, as Descartes said. On top of that, it is also mechanical: the best model for it, in Descartes' view, is the machine-model.

Recent developments in natural science have, however, seriously undermined that view. Matter is not just extension; rather it should be defined in terms of energy, i.e., of activity. Nature is not made up of 'things', but of an innumerable number of centres of activity, acting and reacting upon one another. This is *a fortiori* true for the body as 'living' matter. Life is never mere passivity; it is always activity.

As a consequence, the body is not a thing, and not even a machine; it is an organism made up of other organisms, which are finally made up of events. It is a more or less organised whole of events, on different levels. Not things, but events (atomic, molecular, cellular events) are the basic components of nature and life.

In a fairly literal sense, man is rooted in nature. In fact, no clear-cut separation between the body and the rest of nature is possible. The body is continuous with the external world. We cannot define, in a really exact way, where the body begins and where 'external' nature ends. Both are continuously in interaction. In other words, there is a continuous interaction between the events constituting the body and the events belonging to the rest of nature.

The human body is made up of millions of events, each second. It seems to be an unbelievable stream of activity. Each

cell, each organ is at every moment nothing but an event : a cellular event, an organic event etc. It is its activity. Nevertheless the body is not just a purely chaotic stream of events. It is an organism, and even an organism of organisms. All the events are 'bound together', in such a way that the body feels and acts as one. And this is the criterion to talk about individuality. The human body is an individual being: all the different events, all the different organisms are somehow integrated, on different levels. That means that they are part of a larger whole, to which they contribute. while in turn the whole influences and directs to some extent, at least, the parts. Such an integration takes place on different levels, and the final integration is an event integrating and unifying the whole of the body. That final or "dominant" event, is the unification of all that happens in the body, and in turn it influences the different parts. Here one can start talking about the 'person', in the most general sense of the term. I, as a person, am not 'some-thing', but an event (or an occasion, as Whitehead calls it), namely the dominant event. That means that I am not just my body but the integration of it, i.e., its 'subjective' unity.

In his famous book *La Gnose de Princeton*², describing the 'philosophy' of a group of scientists, especially at Princeton, U.S.A., the French philosopher R. Ruyer uses an interesting model to think this relation between me and my body. He uses the model of the 'inside' and the 'outside', applying it to all there is, but especially to man. Just as at this moment there is not I and my brain, so there is not I and my sight. Rather, my subjectivity should be described in terms of the self-presence of the visual field. The visual field is present to itself, and that presence to itself is constitutive of the subject - indeed, it is the subject. I am my visual field in its 'inside', in its unity. The subject in its most concrete form is 'subject-here-now', i. e., the subjectivity of this visual field - or, more generally, the subject of a certain domain: a visual domain, a domain of consciousness, etc.

This becomes even clearer in the case of I and my brain. I as a conscious being, am not something different from the

brain or something added to it. Rather, the electro-chemical happenings in the brain are the 'outside' of my consciousness, and 'I' am the 'inside' of it.

The same can be said about me and my body in general. There can be no real talk about me *and* my body, except in abstraction. Rather, I am the unity of my body, the "brace" of it, not as something different, not even as some 'objective' unity, but the body as 'present-to-itself'. In other words, I am the auto-presence of my body, its unity lived from the inside. I am the subjective unity of my body, or perhaps better: this unity as a subject.

Time and again the nervous system, and especially the brain, is integrating all that happens in the body. This unification is not purely 'objective': it has an 'outside' and an 'inside'. And what we call "me" is the subjectivity of this unity, here and now. And this subjectivity here and now is the concrete subject.

II. The generalization of 'experience'

The body is made up of an innumerable number of events. But they are bound together so as to constitute one organic whole, of which I am the 'inside', the subjectivity here and now, time and again. Ruyer calls the subject-here-now "*une accolade domaniale*" (a brace encompassing a whole domain). Whitehead talks about "a dominant occasion". In both cases, the subject or the "I" is thought of in real and radical relation to the body. I am the unity of it as a subjective unity. In Whitehead's terms, that means a unity in experience. For him, the occasions making up the body and the dominant occasion constituting the subject-here-now are not radically different; they both are occasions of experience. Ruyer considers the polarity of 'inside' and 'outside' to be universal: 'inside' and 'outside' are categories applicable eventually to all there is, on all levels. For process philosophy, likewise, the notion of experience should be generalized. Not only I-here-now am an experience, being the integration of (among other things) the body. Also the events constituting the body and the events constituting nature and reality in general are experiences, i. e., in some sense or other 'subjective unifications' of their environment.

This idea opens up new ways of thinking. The body is usually thought of as being material, while 'the soul' is spiritual. And since Descartes we have grown used to identifying almost the soul or the subject with consciousness, thereby separating it from the rest: the subject is conscious(ness), the rest is not. This conception is not only Descartes'; often it is the current spontaneous conception of man. Nowadays it becomes more and more questionable. Not only Descartes' notion of the body is untenable, but so is his notion of the subject as *cogito*.

Since Descartes the *cogito* has become the real centre of thought, and this in a double sense. First, it is the basis of all thinking (and thus its 'subject'), but secondly, it is also the 'object' of thinking, viz. that on which all philosophic thought centres. In the last century, however, one has become more and more aware of the onesidedness of the identification of subjectivity and consciousness. At the end of the 19th century, the so-called "philosophers of suspicion" (Marx, Freud, Nietzsche) have undermined this identification, arguing that consciousness is only the top of the iceberg. Today's French structuralists go even further. The subject, as an autonomous centre of freedom and consciousness, they proclaim without hesitation, is a recent invention of Western culture – and it will die very soon, as M. Foucault has put it in a somewhat rhetorical way.³

The glorification of the subject as something completely different from, and even elevated above the rest of the world, has proved to be exaggerated. Does that mean that the subject is dead, as structuralists proclaim? Although it may seem strange at first sight, one can also go the other way and argue that subjectivity is the clue to all the rest of the world. Of course, in that view, subjectivity cannot be thought of as pure consciousness. But other models are possible. So one can say, as Ruyer does, that all reality can and should be understood as having an inside and an outside. Or one can, as process

3. M. Foucault, *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (transl. from the French), New York, Vintage Books, 1973, p. 385.

philosophy does, generalize the notion of experience. In its broadest meaning, experience is surely far more general than consciousness, as, e. g., Freud has made clear. The subject, as we are each of us, is a centre of experience - and whenever one has a real centre of experience, one can talk about subjectivity. In that way, subjectivity - as centre of experience in the most neutral sense - can be generalized, so that it becomes a universal feature of all that is really real. In this approach, our being an experience is paradigmatic for the understanding of all reality, and also of the body.

To understand this further, we should first consider what an experience really is.

1) First of all, an experience is an *occasion*: not a thing, not a substance, but an activity. It is the activity integrating many data into one unity. As such, an experience is not a static thing: rather it is a process, viz. a process of unification. In that process a specific unity is built up.

2) As a consequence, an experience is an *individual* occasion. Each experience is a unification, ending up in a specific, definite and as such an individual unity. The American pragmatist William James talks about 'drops' or 'pulses of experience'. To experience is not a purely continuous activity, but a series of atomic occasions, each being an individual activity and an individual unity on its own.

3) What the final definiteness of an experience will be is partly determined by what is given, but how the given is experienced depends upon the experience itself. In that sense, and to that degree, an experience is at least partly self-creative.

4) On the other hand, to experience is always to experience something else: not just universal qualities, but other occasions in their individuality. Experience is experience of particular actuality. Of course, there is also experience of universals. But then it is not experience of actuality but of potentiality: only the potential is universal; the actual is always particular.

5) Every experience is *dipolar*: it is experience of other actuality, but it is also experience of potential forms of definite-

ness. We always experience universals (i. e., potentials), in the first place, the universals realized in the given actuality. Experience of given actuality, Whitehead calls "physical experience", while for the experience of potentials he uses the word "mental experience" (or mental prehension). Both belong together: there is no experience of actuality without experience of (potential) forms of definiteness.

6) "Mental experience", as the term is used here, is not exactly the same as conscious experience. Not all experience is conscious. Consciousness only arises at a higher level of integration. It is the feeling of the 'affirmation-negation' - contrast, as Whitehead puts it, or, more accurately, *how* we feel that contrast.⁴ That means that consciousness arises only when there is a real feeling of the contrast between what is actually given and what could have been, between what is and what is not (yet).

7) Experience is not only sense-experience, either. More basic than conscious sense-experience is the rather vague and massive experience of our body and our past. These experiences are not 'sensations', but they are far more direct and far more intense than what is usually called a 'sensation'.

8) Furthermore, these experiences are not cool or neutral, but always coloured with emotion. Therefore, *feeling* is a better circumscription of what experience basically is, than 'sensation'. Pleasure and pain, attraction and discomfort, hope, fear and desire: we always experience what is given, in a certain way. And this is not just an accident, but it is really fundamental for our relation to all that is. Not only but is actual but also what is possible, we always experience with a certain emotional tone.

Taking this account of what an experience really is, as a starting point one can throw a new light upon the understanding of the human person.

4. A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality. An Essay in Cosmology*, New York, Macmillan, 1929, p. 245, 372.

III. The human person

A 'subject', in its most concrete form, is an experience, and each individual experience is to be interpreted as a 'subject'. The prototype of reality is such an experience.

With regard to the human person, this implies especially three things.

First, this view throws new light upon the problem of the body and of man's relation to the body. Second, the subject not only exists in a bodily way, but it also essentially refers to its environment in the broadest sense of the term: nothing exists in isolation. And third, man is not a static thing (or a thinking substance, as Descartes called the *cogito*) but an ongoing process.

Let us explain this further:

1. Descartes made a clear-cut distinction between material and thinking substances, and thus between the body and the soul. Man, according to him, is essentially the soul, which should be thought of as a *cogito*. The problem is, however, why there should be bodies and how I and my body can, somehow at least, be bound together, especially if the body is so radically different from me.

Earlier it has been said that this view on the body is questionable. Actually, the body is not a thing at all. Rather, it is made up of units of experiencing on different levels. Whenever there is a real unit of feeling and acting, we can talk about an individual unit of experience. That is true for the cells, for all the higher and more encompassing organisms, and eventually for the body as a whole, too. The final unity of the body is a unity in experience. It is what can be called the unity in a "dominant occasion". So, the body itself is made up of centres of experience and I myself am at every moment a new occasion integrating my body. I am as it were the unity of my body in its 'inside', in its subjectivity.

2. But I am more than just the unity of my body. Being an experience, I am in a more or less radical way qualified by *all* that is given. And what is that 'all'? To begin with, it is my tbody: in a sense the body is my most immediate and mos

(3)

intimate environment. When something goes wrong with my body, *I* really suffer from it. But, as Freud has shown, that is also true for the past: If something goes wrong there, I suffer from it, too. I carry my past, sometimes as a burden, but at the same time as that which makes me possible. I would not be what and who I am, without my past. It colours all my relations, it colours my whole being. It is an essential part of what I am at this moment. Many thinkers (as e. g. Merleau-Ponty) have stressed the radical significance of the body and the past, for all that we are, at every moment.

Nevertheless, I am still more than that. I not only 'feel' what is actually there or what has been (the body, the past), but I am also aware of an immense realm of possibility. We experience not only what is actual, but we also experience possibilities. We are aware of what can or could be. The anticipation of the future is, to some extent at least, a real part of my present experience. Take away the past and the future, and the present collapses.

All this means that I as 'subject' am at each moment that centre of experience, i. e., that experiential unity, in which all the events making up the body and the past, the whole actual world, and the future as dimension of possibility, are one in one experience. I am, at each moment, the lived unity of my world, in the broadest sense of that term.

3. That means that at each moment, too, I am a new experience. New data show up, new events take place, in my body and in the world beyond. What is present now, is past a moment later. Time is cumulative. Again and again, there is a multiplication of the many data, requiring integration. My experience is always different, or better (because experience should be thought of as atomic): the experience I am is always new. So, what "I" am concretely, changes every moment. The concrete ego is the ego-now-here, and this means: this unity of experience occurring at this moment, at this place. In the words of R. Ruyer: the domain-subject I am, is new every time, because the domain changes. The integration I am has to be new, because the 'world' (in the broadest sense) of which I am the experiential unification, is always changing, as time goes on.

What I am concretely, changes continually. 'I-now' am not exactly the same as 'I-yesterday'. The difference may seem negligible, but it is not. Especially when looked upon over a longer period of time, the difference is quite radical. What I am now is really different from what I was, say at the age of ten, so different even, that one can ask questions about the 'identity' of both "egos".

As change is a problem in a static conception of man, so self-identity is a basic problem in a dynamic view. If I am now so different from what I was at the age of ten, in what sense, then, is it possible and meaningful to talk about the same "I"?

On the most concrete level, I am an always new experience. Nevertheless, looked upon from a broader perspective, I am more than just one experience. Rather, I am a *series* of experiences, the one after the other, each experience being an individual unity on its own, but integrating the previous ones. In that sense, I am, as Whitehead puts it, "a personally ordered society of occasions": not just *one* experience, but a *society* of experiences, ordered serially.

Before exploring this further, however, we should look from a still broader perspective. Why, after all, is there that serial order? All the experiences I am, are not just together in fact, but somehow they belong together a priori. I am not just all the experiences I have been up to now, but somehow all my future experiences will be 'mine', too. Or better, all the experiences I will be in the future, shall be somehow prolongations of the "route" of experiences that is constituting me now. In this (broadest) sense, I am more than just what I am or what I have been.

Trying to conceptualize this, Whitehead borrows a notion Plato uses to think of the Universe in its unity. In the *Timaeus* Plato talks about the Receptacle⁵, being the *Locus* that provides an emplacement for all that happens. Likewise, in human life, there is a receptacle imposing a unity upon all the experiences, by which all these experiences are "mine". It is their a priori

5. Plato, *Timaeus*, 50 b-c, 51a.

community. The notion of "life-span" somehow fulfils that function. It encompasses in an a priori way all the experiences that are or will be mine. Having no character of its own, my "life-span" is a matrix for all the transitions of life, and it is changed and variously figured by the different experiences emerging within it. In that way, I - in the most general and broadest sense of that word - am the receptacle, encompassing a priori all my experiences. Personal identity does not just apply to what I have been and to what I am now. It also applies to the future.

However, this receptacle is at the same time the emptiest notion concerning personal identity we can imagine. It has to be filled up and to get content. It will get this from the actual experiences I am, moment after moment. Personal identity is not only an encompassing but empty matrix: it is something real, too, realizing itself in the different experiences that I am. But how can that identity be conceived?

First of all, there is a basic continuity on the level of the body, being part of the general continuity of nature. In nature, each event is to a large extent the 're-production' of earlier events. Novelty is there at the minimum, the influence of what is given is at the maximum. The present is to a very large degree the re-enactment of the past. The cells making up my body now, are re-productions, in the literal sense, of the cells that made up my body twenty years ago.

But this bodily continuity is not enough to talk about the same 'I'. To be able to do so, a deeper continuity is needed, viz. a continuity on the level of my personal experience. Charles Hartshorne has stressed the basic significance of the category of memory to understand personal identity. In each new experience that I am, my previous experiences are really efficacious. Especially the influence of my experience a moment ago is very strong, and it should be: without that influence, no talk about self-identity would be possible. Rather, we would have to talk about "loss of personality".

Personal identity consists first of all in a real and even radical inheritance from the past: I am a route of events, each

event inheriting from the previous ones and influencing the next ones. Through that inheritance, there is a similarity of character in our way of experiencing and thus in our way of being.

'I-now' and 'I-at-the-age-of-ten' both belong to the same route of events. I now am the integration of that whole route of events making up my "personal history". What I was at the age of ten is still influencing me in a radical sense. And the word 'radical' should be taken literally, in the sense of "radix" (root): I-now have my roots in my past, at least as strongly as in my body. Both are basic elements to understand self-identity. Of course I have also my roots in the world that surrounds me now, but that is an element for change, rather than for self-identity.

What makes me "the same" throughout time is in the first place my history. I will always carry it with me. That history is so important that it determines to a large extent what it means for me now to be the unification of my world. Because of that cumulative history, not only am I a new experience each moment, but my basic approach, i.e., the basic characteristics of all the concrete experiences I am, is the same, too. In this respect, Sartre talks about a fundamental choice, and Merleau-Ponty about "a sedimentation of life".⁶ Of course, this basic approach changes, too. I can be sure that what it means to me to be in the world (to borrow a term from existential phenomenology), will be really different within thirty years from now, from what it means now. In that sense, self-identity does not mean pure unchangeability. Rather it means a common defining characteristic to the experiences I am, changeable through time, but so inheriting from the past that all these experiences still are mine. My "life-span", then, is as it were the a priori receptacle of all these experiences, past, present and future. It is the general unity of what I have been, what I am and what I shall be.

6. In the last chapter of his *Phenomenology of Perception*.

IV. Man and reason

I am not just the unity of what is actual, but I am also experiencing new possibilities. To a certain extent, I am always "designing" myself. I am discovering and realizing novelty.

Physical experience is repetitive. Mental experience is directed towards novelty. But both cannot be drawn apart. Mental experience is first of all part of physical experience, or rather an aspect of it. In its lowest form it is the feeling of the forms of definiteness realized in what is given as actuality, together with the urge towards their re-actualization. In that sense, i. e., in the form of final causation, mentality is universal. All activity, all experiencing aims at something, at least at some final unification (because all experience is unification), at the enjoyment of final definiteness. "In its essence", Whitehead writes, "mentality is the urge towards some vacuous definiteness, to include it in matter-of-fact, which is non-vacuous enjoyment. This urge is appetite. It is emotional purpose: it is agency."⁷

On levels of existence higher than just this, mentality emphasizes the urge at *new* forms of definiteness. It does not stay with what *is*, but new possibilities become relevant.

In itself, however, mentality is anarchic. It needs to be criticized and canalized. Appetition without a *specific* aim, and without *some* attention to the whole, is chaotic and risks to be very destructive. It needs orientation. Reason, then, is the self-discipline of the originaive element mentality is. Reason is as it were a second-order type of mentality. It is the appetite of appetitions.⁸ It emphasizes and criticizes the final causes and the strength of aims directed towards them. A chaotic urge is ineffective.

The primary function of reason is the direction of the attack on the environment. As such, it is practical reason. It is the reason Ulysses shares with the foxes.⁹ One of the main

7. A. N. Whitehead, *The Function of Reason*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1929, p. 26.

8. Id., *ibid*, p.

9. Id., *o. c.*, p. 7.

characteristics of the higher forms of life is that they are actively modifying their environment, in order, first to assure their life, but also to ameliorate it. They do not just undergo their environment, they attack it, in order to subdue it to their needs. A large part of man's life is devoted to that task. He designs instruments, modifies them, and makes them more adequate. As Hegel says, in the instrument consciousness gets a real existence.¹⁰

But reason is not just a factor *within* the world, directing the attack on it. In a way, it also asserts itself 'above' the world. Reason is not only a means for the fulfilment of our needs, but it also strives for understanding, (first of all) for its own sake. Here, reason becomes speculation: it builds theories but is not satisfied with them. It explores reality, venturing itself at the boundaries of imagination, but with the aim of understanding what really *is*. This is the kind of reason Plato shared with the gods, untrammelled by method, piercing into the foundations of Reality. As such, reason is a touch of infinity: unsatisfied by the 'good' life, it is always urging towards a 'better' life, towards new dimensions and broader horizons.

Man's relation to the world is based upon a three-fold urge: to live, to live well, to live better.¹¹ Practical reason is concerned with a better and more adequate praxis: it makes survival possible and invents methods to make it a 'good' life. But even with a well-guided praxis, man is not satisfied. Inherent in him is the urge towards a 'better' life. In its speculative aspect, reason breaks open from grasping to understanding.

But what does a 'better' life mean? And what does a 'good' life mean? Ultimately this should be stated in terms of richness of experience. In its speculative aspect, reason strives for understanding: reality is not just attacked, being a means for the fulfilment of our needs – as in practical reason – but it is understood in its truth, in its harmony, in its beauty. As such, reason leads to a deeper experience: broader in its perspective, richer in its content, intenser in its contrasts, more harmonious in its

10. G. W. F. Hegel, *Jenaer Realphilosophie* I, ed. by J. Hoffmeister, Leipzig, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1932.

11. A. N. Whitehead, *o. c.*, p. 5.

unity. Reason is a factor enhancing what is of final importance for all experience and for all life, viz. Beauty.

V. Beauty and peace

In general, beauty is the mutual adaptation of several factors in an occasion of experience. As such, it is more than the absence of inhibition. Rather, it is the result of qualitative contrasts, unified in a harmony which in turn is rendered more intense by these contrasts. Real beauty requires intensity *in* harmony. It is the result of qualitative variety in the data, but in the synthesis, too, new contrasts arise, deepening the importance of the parts and intensifying the massive feeling of the whole. Beauty is realized in experience: it is the intrinsic value of experiencing as such and of each individual experience in particular.

Pure unification without contrast is stifling: there is no freshness, no intensity. Eventually, that means decay. What does not progress, decays. It sinks downwards into triviality. In nature, there is the degradation of energy, and on the cultural level, there are the examples of high civilizations that stifled, for want of fresh impulses. But a counter-agency is operative: it is mentality, and on a higher level, it is reason.

All actualization is finite. No perfection is final. Beyond all that has been realized – with its harmony *and* its discord – man can and should reach for new perfections. Discord, here, is not just negative or purely unimportant: out of the feeling of it, new ideas can arise, opening new horizons. By the work of ideas and of reason, process becomes history, and pure on-goingness becomes an adventure towards beauty, contributing to the Universe, now and forever.

Rightly, truth has been functioning in the Western philosophical tradition, as a basic ideal. It cannot be the aim of any philosophy to diminish the value of that ideal, which is the ideal of philosophy itself. However, though being the realization of the highest potentialities in man, truth is not final. Like goodness – stressed also by many philosophers as being the ultimate value, and this not without reason, either –

truth has its full meaning only in the context of life in general: and life is experience, it is feeling. The richness of life, i. e., the richness of feeling, is the final aim; richness of enjoyment, not just for ourselves, but in as broad a perspective as possible; for the present and the future, for our and for all experience, for mankind and eventually for the Universe as such. Truth and goodness only have an ultimate value exactly in contributing to that richness. Together with beauty, they are basic notions, but the most encompassing one is beauty. By its very nature, beauty is self-justifying.

All beauty finds its first importance in the immediacy of the present, being the richness of enjoyment of the present experience. But as such, it perishes. Nevertheless, it is a fact and can never be done away with. It is a factor, enhancing the beauty of the Universe. As such, it acquires everlastingness. Ineradicably, it belongs to the Universe. In a religious perspective, that means that it belongs indestructably to God. The God of religion is related to all that happens. Nothing is alien to Him. As Whitehead and especially Hartshorne have elucidated, that means that God is the All-encompassing Experience, integrating up to the least details. All beauty is an element in His enjoyment, now and forever. It is 'in' Him, contributing not just to a blind Universe, but to the value of divine experience. Beauty perishes, yet it lives for evermore.

God is the great Companion: He is the All-inclusive Experience and at the same time the Lord of possibilities. He enjoys all enjoyment and all beauty, but, in turn, He 'lures' to new forms of harmony and intensity, to goodness, truth and beauty. He inspires us to realize the highest beauty possible in the given circumstances, to make the best out of ourselves, and, more specifically, to transcend our own limited perspectives.

The awareness of all this, according to Whitehead, is the secret of Peace. The trust in the efficacy of beauty and in its ultimate significance gives a quality to our lives that is not the

12. In the literal sense of "aesthetic beauty". After all, "feeling" and the Greek word "aisthanomai" are not that far apart from each other.

result of a search: peace comes as a gift. It crowns our efforts and our adventures, our search for beauty and our failures to attain it because of conflicting interests. But here, as a conclusion, it is best to let Whitehead speak for himself, in his own suggestive words¹³:

"At the heart of the nature of things, there are always the dream of youth and the harvest of tragedy. The adventure of the Universe starts with the dream and reaps tragic Beauty. This is the secret of the union of Zest with Peace: - That the suffering attains its end in a Harmony of Harmonies. The immediate experience of this Final Fact, with its union of Youth and Tragedy, is the sense of Peace. (...) The Peace that is here meant is not the negative conception of anaesthesia. It is a positive feeling which crowns the 'life and motion' of the soul. It is hard to define and difficult to speak of. It is not a hope for the future, nor is it an interest in present details. It is a broadening of feeling due to the emergence of some deep metaphysical insight, un verbalized and yet momentous in its coördination of values. Its first effect is the removal of the stress of acquisitive feeling arising from the soul's preoccupation with itself. Thus Peace carries with it a surpassing of personality. There is an inversion of relative values. It is primarily a trust in the efficacy of Beauty. It is a sense that fineness of achievement is as it were a key unlocking treasures that the narrow nature of things would keep remote. There is thus involved a grasp of infinitude, an appeal beyond boundaries. Its emotional effect is the subsidence of turbulence which inhibits. More accurately, it preserves the springs of energy, and at the same time masters them for the avoidance of paralysing distractions. The trust in the self-justification of Beauty introduces faith, where reason fails to reveal the details."

Universitaire Campus
B - 8500 Kortrijk
Belgium

André Cloots

13. A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, New York, Macmillan, 1933, p. 381 and 367.

Lord or Partner of the World?

on the Need for a New Vision of Man-World Relationship

The fact that man is related to the world does not need to be proved (5:12-14)* For it is in being related to and in relating himself to realities which seem somehow connected with one another and which we call the 'world' that man knows and realizes himself. Thus, the understanding we have of the world is conditioned not only by what things are in themselves but also by the way we understand ourselves and choose to realize our relationship with what we are not. And this in turn is influenced by what we think of the meaning of reality, of God or gods, and how we relate ourselves and other beings to God, gods, or the meaning of reality as such. In this light it is natural that world views have an invariably human or anthropological aspect. But it does make a difference whether realities are seen and valued solely or mainly for what they mean for man and his life or whether they are recognized and accepted for what they are and as basically related to one another. Thus, we may distinguish between two main approaches to the world, one *anthropocentric* and the other *universalist*. Both are widely spread, influential, and have a long history, but in recent times, the anthropocentric perspective has been gaining ascendancy over the universalist approach. The Jewish, Christian, and Islamic faiths have on the whole been anthropocentric in their world view, and anthropocentrism is an important component of the Western civilization.

* In this article, references are made with the help of bracketed numbers in the text. The first number refers to the book or article listed at the end of the article, and the number(s) after the colon to the page(s) or columns of the same work.

In this article, we shall try to analyse and evaluate some of the important expressions of Christian and Western anthropocentrism, and ask if and how it is possible to have a truer understanding of the world and a more human and ethical relationship with it.

I. The anthropocentric perspective

1. The Bible

The Christian belief is basically theocentric; yet, as far as man's relationship with the rest of the world is concerned, it is definitely anthropocentric. Man is seen as the meaning and purpose of the whole creation, and all other realities are said to be entrusted to man's use and dominion. And this belief is shared by both the Yahwist and Priestly accounts of creation (91:144-153; 109:25-29). The way the Priestly author narrates the creation of heaven and earth, of non-living things like the sun and the moon, of plants and animals indicates a definite order leading up to man as the crown of creation (Gen 1:1-2.4b). While the non-human beings are created directly or indirectly through God's word, man's creation is preceded by a special and solemn divine consultation with the heavenly court, and the model on which he is fashioned is derived also from the heavenly world: "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness" (v. 26). The fact that man alone of all things is created in God's own image and likeness shows his unique dignity, his superiority to other creatures (21:29f.; 91:149). That man is created in God's image means that he represents God on earth, as images or statues represented the sovereigns in those regions of their kingdom, where they could not be present personally. The text does not say in what exactly the divine image consists, but it shows clearly what it means in man's relationship with the rest of creation (22:81 f.; 90:41f). God makes man in his image and likeness and wants that he has "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over everything that creeps upon the earth" (v. 26). The blessing he imparts to man confirms this task of dominion over the world: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over everything that moves upon the earth" (v. 28). And God gives all plants that

bear seed, and every tree that bear fruit as food for man. It is not said how man is to subdue the earth, or to rule over other living beings. However, man's right and duty to subdue and govern the earth, and all creatures in it is unambiguously asserted. It is significant that the dominion over the animals, perhaps the only possible rivals of man in the writer's view, is expressed in strong words, *rādāh*, trample, and *kābaṣ*, tread down (91:150f). The vegetation is expressly mentioned as being there to be man's food and that of the animals. Thus, man is the lord and master of the world in which he finds himself, no doubt, subject to God and in God's name, and the non-human beings, both living and non-living, are to be subdued and dominated by him.

The Yahwist view of creation (Gen 2:4b-25) is in a sense more antropocentric than the Priestly one (91:146; 110:25f). What the Priestly account describes in detail, is expressed by the Yahwist in a nutshell when he speaks of the way God made the earth and the heavens, and passes on to showing how God made the earth into a fruitful, cultivated land. He formed man, *ādām*, from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Here, man's creation is due to a more intimate, personal act of God than in Gen 1:26f., and this distinguishes man from other beings. For he has his life from his God's breath, and his life is not something inherent in his body. The way God prepared the earth, planted a garden, and "made to grow every tree, pleasant to sight and good for food" shows that the earth is there for man's use. The animals and birds were formed out of the ground by God, because God finds "that it is not good that man should be alone" (v. 18). And man gives each living creature its name, a fact that indicates his dominion over them. Yet, none of these could be a real partner for man, and so God made the woman, whom he recognizes immediately as a true partner, as the "bone of my bones and the flesh of my flesh" (v. 23).

Ps 8 may be said to be an explication of Gen 1:26ff (110:30; 100:40). The author is filled with awe at the sight of the heavens, of the moon and the stars, all worthy of God's hands, and asks what mortal man is for God to remember him and care for him: "Yet thou hast made him little less than a god",

elohim, crowning him with glory and honour (vv 4-5). God has given him, in fact, dominion over the works of his hands, and put all things under his feet: "all sheep and oxen, all the wild beasts, the birds in the air and the fish in the sea, and all that moves along the paths of the ocean" (vv 6-8).

The anthropocentric constitution of the world is equally evident in the way the earth and the things in it are affected by man's estrangement from God (Gen 3:1-24) (110:147-152). Persuaded by the serpent, the woman and then her husband eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which God had forbidden them to eat (Gen 2:17). God punishes both by expelling them from the garden. And this has an alienating effect not only on man and his "enlightener", the serpent, but also on the whole earth. "Because you have listened to your wife and eaten of the tree, cursed is the ground because of you: in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field" (vv 17ff). Here, death, sufferings, and the hard conditions in which man has to earn his living are seen aetiologically as a consequence of man's sin against God. There is as a result no more harmony between man and nature; indeed, nature now becomes indifferent, even hostile to man. And the restoration of the harmony is as anthropocentric as its disruption. Isaiah describes the peace and harmony which the Messianic reconciliation of man with God will effect: "The wolf shall live with the sheep, and the leopard lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall grow up together, and a little child shall lead them... They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain..." (11:6-9).

Sin does not, however, destroy the divine image in man, nor does it abolish his dominion over the world (91:151; 100:21, 42; 104:449). This is indicated by the way Gen 5:1-4 speaks of God's making Adam in his likeness, and of Adam's begetting Seth in his own image, and after his likeness. This is the case even at the time of Noah: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image" (Gen 9:6). In fact, God makes a covenant with Noah after the flood, though he knows well that man has not changed and that he is inclined to evil from his youth: "I will never

again curse the ground because of man... While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease" (Gen 8:21f). This guarantee of the ecological balance is matched by the renewal of man's dominion over the world: "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon everything that creeps on the ground and the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing shall be food for you; and as I gave you the green plants, I give you every thing" (Gen 9:2f). Man's lordship becomes here almost total: All creatures are delivered into his hands, and he may eat them without scruple. Probably as a result of sin man's domination of nature takes on an aspect of terror (105:449). His lordship over the world involves violence, and this is legitimized by the narrative when it speaks of the fear and dread the animals will have of man and their being delivered into his hands.

There are also other passages in the OT that lay emphasis on man's privileged position among the creatures, in spite of his sinfulness and his constant need of God's mercy. God in his wisdom has fashioned man to be master of the whole creation and to be the steward of the world in holiness and righteousness (Wisd 9:1-3), he has given man authority over everything on earth, putting the fear of man into all creatures, and giving him lordship over beasts and birds (Sir 17:2-3, 6-7, 11). It is for man, formed by God's own hands and made in his image, that everything else has been made (2 Ezra 8:44).

That man is created in God's image and is as such the crown of creation is an obvious presupposition of the NT, but this belief is on the whole mentioned in passing rather than thematized (James 3:7-9; 1 Cor 11:7). Jesus as the Christ, as God's word become man for man's salvation, is the core of the NT faith, and this gives all NT anthropology a Christological slant (13:91f.; 103: 147; 57:165f. 214). Paul interprets the divine image of Gen 1:26f in a soteriological sense and applies it primarily to Christ (16:197; 100:22, 45-48). Christ is the true image, *eikon*, of God (2 Cor 4:4), and the believer is to be transformed by the Spirit into his likeness (2 Cor 3:18). God who knew his own before everything was, has ordained that they should be

shaped into the likeness of his Son, so that he might be the first-born of a family of brothers (Rom 8:29). Thus, for Paul the image of God in man is a participation in the divine image which Christ is, and the likeness we have of the first man is basically inferior to the likeness of Christ, the heavenly man (1 Cor 15:45f). This Christological interpretation of the divine image is shared as much by the Deutero-Pauline letters (Col. 1:15-20; Heb 1:3) (103:189f, 193f). Equally significant is the anthropological interpretation of *kosmos*, the world as a whole or the universe in Greek thought (12:105-116). In Paul, 'world' means in most cases the historical world of man and the world has as a rule a pessimistic note (Rom 3:6; 5:12) (13:254-258). It denotes generally the sinful world, the domain of the demonic powers which are inimical to God, and endanger man's salvation (13:258f). The whole universe has been made a victim of frustration through man's sin, and not by its own choice, and its groaning will have an end only when it comes to share in Man's liberation and glory (Rom 8:19-22). In this passing world, it would be better to deal with it as if one were not dealing with it (1 Cor 7:28-30).

The world is the human world in John as well. It is the world which God loves and to which he sends his Son, but which does not receive him (Jn 1:10f., 15:18) (13:368f; 60:132-135). Thus the cosmos is seen and valued by the NT exclusively from a human and soteriological view; its present as well as future is anthropologically conditioned.*

II. An evaluation of anthropocentrism

We have considered only a cross section of Judeo-Christian and Western writings concerning man's relationship with the world. But these are by and large representative of both the Christian and Western approach to the problem. The

* The rest of Part I is here omitted for want of space. Therein Arakkal makes a long survey of the Fathers of the Church and the important representatives of modern thought like Bacon, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Heidegger and Sartre, all of whom are said to have, one way or other, contributed to a still further radicalization of anthropocentrism which has readily been appropriated by modern theology in the West.

few notable exceptions across the centuries—Arnobius, Francis of Assisi, Bruno, Spinoza, Shaftesbury, Goethe, Hölderlin, Nietzsche, and others - confirm the rule rather than disprove it. If we should be able to tell the tree from its fruits, we need first to look into the practical consequences of the man-centred conquest and domination of nature. If they are not all positive or humanizing, it needs to be asked if this has something to do with the anthropocentric perspective.

1. Anthropocentrism in practice

Even the primitive man had some idea, often anthropomorphic, and not sufficiently differentiated, of the nature of things and the way they function. He knew how to use them, not only to satisfy his needs but also to facilitate or even substitute the work of his hands. In the course of time he came to acquire a measure of real power over things. However, it is in modern times that this has assumed the character of what is usually called the domination of nature. The anthropocentric ideal of "subduing the earth" and governing the rest of the world has to a considerable extent been realized today. The question arises, therefore, what anthropocentrism in practice means for man and for other realities.

1. *Prosperity, freedom and alienation*

Whatever the representatives of cultural pessimism may say, there can be no doubt that the progress of science and technology has brought a greater measure of freedom and security to large sections of the people in Western countries; health and longevity have been considerably enhanced; the means of information and communication have been greatly improved. This is a real achievement, and there is no question of denying or belittling it. Yet it is difficult to say that man's unprecedented domination of and power over nature has made life in every way more human or free, that there is more solidarity ensuing from increased communication, that there is a more equitable sharing of earthly goods as a result of the greatly increased productivity. Moreover, it would seem that the new prosperity and freedom have been bought at a high price. Machines have made life easier, but their ever-growing complexity and refinement demand an extraordinary measure of concentration on the part of man causing stress and giving little room

for the individual's creativity. It is not seldom that man is compelled to adapt himself to the machines rather than that the machines are adapted to man. The extremely complex and competitive manner in which the production and distribution of commodities and services are organized create compulsions that are repressive and alienating. If the ideal is to produce more and more, the consumer must be prepared to want more and more. This is achieved through refined psychological manipulation by which artificial needs are created and man is forced to want what he does not in fact need. In a technocratic society, devoted to a maximum of production and consumption, man is made a part of the total machine, well fed and entertained, yet passive, unalive, with little feeling for himself and for others (29: 1,31f).

The conquest and exploitation of nature does not necessarily entail the oppression and exploitation of man by man. Yet, it is a fact that the modern scientific and technological domination of nature increased and perfected the exploitation of the working classes by the bourgeois. Forced to sell his labour to make a living by earning money, the wage labourer, as Marx has pointed out was reduced to a state of commodity on sale on the market, enslaved not only by the bourgeois producer and the bourgeois state but also by the machine (68: 302f; 69: 92f). In the course of time, however, capitalism has reformed itself to meet the challenge of organized labour and has enabled the working classes to increase their living standard to such an extent that poverty in Western countries is no more an incentive to revolutionary action.

This is not, however, the case with impoverished peoples in Asia, Africa, and the Americas, brutally enslaved and exploited in the course of the colonialist expansion. The colonies were both suppliers of raw materials and export markets for the colonial powers at a time when they made the extraordinary, scientific and technological progress which we call the industrial revolution. The way colonialist expansion and capitalist industrial growth went hand in hand is evident in India's "development" into an underdeveloped country during this period (34:35f.). Marx's description of the bourgeois exploitation of the world, determining the production and consumption of goods on a world-wide basis, forcing countries with an entirely different economy and way of life to adopt the capitalistic mode of production (70:

529f.) is as much true of the contemporary situation as of the 19th century world. With far from balanced economies in a world economic system created by the West, these countries are still dependent on the "superior", "developed" nations of the West, although politically colonialism has come to an end except in some parts of the world.

ii. *The crisis of growth*

More significant than this is the fact that scientists and technologists themselves, though not many up to now, are becoming aware of the inherent limits of man's domination and exploitation of the world. In a report on the state of Mankind, *The Limits to Growth*, a group of scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) shows with the help of system analysis that we will reach the absolute limits to growth in the next hundred years, if the present increase in population, industrial and agricultural production, the exploitation of natural resources and environmental pollution is to continue unabated (71:36-57). For instance, if the industrial production is to grow exponentially, many of the non-regenerable raw materials will be exhausted in less than 50 years: aluminium in 31, copper in 21, lead and petroleum in 20, tin in 25 years. Even 'supposing there are five times more reserves than we know today of these resources, they may last only a few years longer, and not indefinitely. Besides, the growth of agricultural or industrial production at the present rate would increase environmental pollution to an intolerable degree with catastrophic consequences for the ecological equilibrium (71:57-73). The study urges it would be illusory to believe that these problems could be solved by technological progress (71:128-140), and it stresses the need to recognize the limits to growth and strive towards a state of global equilibrium (74:154-157, 161-164).

The second report to the Club of Rome, *Mankind at a Turning Point*, the authors do not call growth as such in question - something for which the MIT study was widely criticized - but only undifferentiated growth (72:12-17). The fact is that we cannot do without differentiated organic growth, for to prescribe a global moratorium on growth the world is far from a homogeneous whole. However, the limits to undifferentiated growth is as much vindicated by the new study, and it points to the need for radical changes in the production and consum-

ption patterns of the developed countries of the West (72:127, 133-142). For with only 19. 5% of the world's population, these countries use almost 70% of the world's copper, tin, lead, and zink although they produce only 36.6% of these materials (72:32). With only 6% of the world's population, North America alone uses 30% of world's energy (72:126). The crisis of growth facing us today is one brought about as the result of a progress, something accepted as a value traditionally (72: 19,21). Thus, it calls for a new scale of values, a new consumer ethics, a new world economy that avoids the violent, total domination and exploitation of nature (72:19-22, 133-136).

iii. The fate of non-human realities

We would not speak of 'exploiting' a human being, the world has a connotation of illicitness, of unethical behaviour. We have, however, no hesitation to speak of 'exploiting' nature which is something symptomatic of our attitude to non-human realities. It is as if man were the author or at least the owner of the non-human world, as if nature and the worldly realities were there solely for man's sake so that he could do with them whatever he wants to—use, manipulate, squander, destroy. In the modern world, except for a few individuals and groups, here and there, nobody cares for what happens to non-human realities as long as man himself is not affected thereby. This is the case even when it is the question of the fate of animals, man's nearest relatives (106:11-28). The indifference seems to grow in proportion to man's growth in self affirmation. Animals were automats without a soul for Descartes, they were mere things for Kant, and there are Civil Laws that speak of animals as things. The species of animals directly or indirectly destroyed by man since the 18th century amount to 500. Today, the rearing of domestic animals has on the whole been governed by one consideration—a maximum of profit with a minimum of expense. And man has now the knowledge and power necessary to achieve the purpose. In modern animal farms, the 'dumb' creatures of God are forced to fulfil the functions dictated by economic considerations: to grow as fat and fleshy as possible, to produce as much milk or lay as many eggs as possible, with little consideration for what they need as living beings with their specific nature, needs and way of being. This is not to deny that there is a certain amount of love for animals in many

circles, but this love is not seldom an expression of man's own self-love. If we go into the motives underlying man's dealings with the animals today, we would come soon to the depressing conclusion that almost all these motives are anthropocentric. Nothing or only very little is done for the sake of the animals themselves.

2. Anthropocentrism: its truth and validity

Thus, anthropocentrism in practice has not only positive but also negative and alienating consequences for man and other realities. Now the question is whether this is a necessary consequence of science and technology. Is the world created by science, as Marcuse would say, a world where the domination of nature goes hand in hand with the domination of man (65:171-174,180)? According to Marcuse, as conceptual thought and behaviour, reason is necessarily power, domination, and *logos*, law, rule, order (66:181f.). It means subsuming individual cases under a general concept, subjecting particulars to the power of the universal. Here, Marcuse mixes up a particular historically conditioned development of scientific rationality and its tendency to quantify the whole of reality with scientific rationality and technology as such. But the fact is that generalization or quantification does not necessarily entail a denial of the individual or qualitative dimension of the reality concerned. When I subsume a particular, e. g., an apple, under a category, e. g., 'apples' I do not deny or destroy its individuality. One may be tempted to forget the differences between one apple and another when one hears the word 'apple', but concretely it is not unimportant what the particular apple is, whether it is big or small, ripe, unripe, or spoiled, etc. Similarly, when I measure the feet of my child to buy him suitable shoes, I am not reducing him to these measurements. Abstraction implies like any knowledge, a certain distantiation of the subject from the object, but this is not necessarily the subject's subduing the object, as Horkheimer and Adorno have said (50:16). Knowledge is rather the being-with of the subject with the object in distance, a unity-in-difference, where the object is neither reduced to nor assimilated by the subject, but is left to be what it is in itself. Thus, behaviour on the pattern of solidarity may follow the act of knowing as much as that on the pattern of domination. Again, that we use a thing as a tool, does not reduce

its being to that of a tool. If its being consisted wholly in its function as a tool, it would not even be possible to make it a better or different tool, or to use it for a different purpose. In fact, to consider scientific method and technical rationality as oppressive by nature is to make them irreformable.

Thus, the destructive, dehumanizing features of modern technology is due rather to the way it has been developed, to the spirit and the purpose which have been operative in its application. It is connected with and conditioned by the socio-economic situation of its origin and development. For instance the fact that in the beginning of the modern age mechanics rather than quantitative chemistry was developed, was due to the military and city-building needs of the time, and not to purely scientific reasons (1:59f.). Even today, scientific research and technical development are determined very much by the interests of the state, especially its military needs, and the powerful industrial concerns (64:12ff.). Bloch is right in drawing attention to the way all goods are transformed into commodities in the capitalist system, where what matters is not so much the qualities of the things exchanged but their price (9:778). What Marx said of the private property is as much true of the capitalistic technology: "The private property alienates not only the individuality of man, but also that of things". Yet, it is doubtful if capitalism, barter, and the profit motive alone can account for the destructive, alienating consequences of modern technology, if the abolition of the exploitation of man by man would by itself abolish man's destructive, exploitative behaviour in relation to the world and his alienation from it. For respect for fellowmen does not imply automatically also respect for or valuing of non-human realities. On the contrary, even the veneration of a non-human reality may co exist with the exploitation of fellowmen as we see, for instance, in the cow-worship of the upper caste Hindus. Besides, if labour or the means of production constitute only an aspect of the total reality of man and his relationship with the world, and not the *only* determining factor in life, it is necessary that we consider these as aspects or dimensions of man's being and his relationship with the world. This would mean that we take into account also the way man views and values his own being, the world, and reality as a

whole, as this may be much a conditioning factor of his life as the material condition of his existence is. If this is the case, the anthropocentric perspective and the world-domination it implies cannot but have influenced the particular structure and shape of Western science and technology.

i. *Disenchantment and desacralization*

In the Christian perspective the world is not divine, neither a part nor an emanation of God. The God of Christianity is a transcendent God and the world his creation. This contrasts sharply with the wide-spread belief in the divinity of the world and worldly realities. There are countless examples in world's religions for the apotheosis of the earth, the sun, and the sky, for the worship of cows, snakes, monkeys, horses, for the veneration of trees, stones, rivers, mountains, etc. as sacred, living, divine (73:151-156). Christianity's belief that the world and all that is in it, the earth, the sun, and the moon, all the living and non-living beings including animals and man - are God's creation means a profound dedivinization of the world, a disenchantment of nature and natural powers which man does not need to appease by means of offerings, by animal or human sacrifices, to bribe or force by magic. If these are all natural realities, some living and conscious like man and others different from him, there is no need to fear, please or appease them as one would have to when dealing with a capricious human tyrant. This is no doubt a genuine, decisive progress in man's emancipation, and Christianity has contributed its share in this emancipatory process.

However, this has been a mixed blessing, considering the desacralization of the worldly realities, resulting from the dedivinization of the world. In fact, this dedivinization, naively acclaimed by modern theology as a consequence of the Christian faith, has a tendency to rob the worldly realities of all sacredness and right to respect. For despite all untruth and superstition, there is something profoundly true in the world-understanding of animist and natural religions. They recognize the value, the qualities and power inherent in the world and worldly realities, and they have a profound respect for non-human beings. The grateful, familial, partner-like attitude of the "primitives" to the "Mother Earth" or the "Father Sky" has something genuinely true and wholesome in it, and it is not false or alienating as

long as these expressions are not dogmatized, i. e., taken literally, the earth, the sky, or any other worldly reality for that matter, being understood strictly on the pattern of human beings and the way they act and react. That this has not seldom been the case does not mean that it must have necessarily been so in all cases. This is something that needs to be ascertained, and not dogmatically asserted. In this respect, it is necessary to develop a critical attitude to the OT polemics against the gods of Canaan and theology's apologetic condemnation of non-Christian beliefs as untrue, unethical, or inhuman. The fact is that the Judeo-Christian views of God are not wholly free from ideological aspects with dehumanizing consequences.

ii. *Anthropocentrism and World-domination*

A characteristic feature of the Judeo-Christian and Western view of man and the world is its sharp differentiation of man from the non-human world. Attention is focused on what is specific to man, the emphasis is invariably on man's uniqueness and dignity, both as individual and as society. Legitimate and ennobling as this is, Western anthropology has a tendency to exaggerate the point, absolutizing the dignity of man and his difference from non-human beings. Focusing on the free, self-conscious, unique nature of the human person, it loses sight of what relates man to the rest of the world and devalues the non-human world as if its value consisted merely in being there for man's use, as his life-environment, as material for his self-realization, as his tool and utensil.*

III. The perspective of solidarity

The critique of anthropocentrism leads naturally to the question if there is a viable alternative to granting man a certain preeminence and uniqueness, to emphasizing his difference from the rest of the world. Is it possible, for instance, to repudiate anthropocentrism without denying the uniqueness, freedom, and dignity of man? Does not the emphasis on what is common to beings imply a levelling of the differences among

* The rest of Part II is omitted, wherein the writer evaluates the Christian tradition, modern philosophy and modern theology with respect to anthropocentrism.

realities, an indifference to what is specific or unique in different beings? The critique of anthropocentrism, if uncritically radicalized, may lead to a monistic approach to reality that would view and value all beings including man either on the pattern of what we call 'material' or 'non-living' beings or on that of what we call 'living', 'conscious', or 'spiritual' realities. All difference and multiplicity would then become a matter of accidental attribution or a result of ignorance and illusion. There are several instances of such developments in the history of religion and philosophy.

Now, whatever be the risks of exaggeration in this direction, the alternative to anthropocentrism is not the monistic levelling of the differences among beings but the development of a vision of and approach to reality which we may call the perspective of solidarity, a perspective that accepts both what unites and what differentiates beings among themselves. In fact, our experience of reality is as much a perception of the difference and multiplicity as of the resemblance and unity in the realm of being. The unity we experience is always a unity in difference, it is the oneness of many different beings and of the different aspects or components of particular beings. The idea of an absolute unity, a unity without difference or otherness is the result of an abstraction. This is equally true of our experience of difference and multiplicity. We have no experience of reality that does not show at least some similarity or unity between the beings or aspects we characterize as different, as many rather than one. Our perception of difference and multiplicity is dialectically related to that of resemblance and unity, and so it would be false to absolutize the one or the other or to isolate the one from the other.

1. The meaning of solidarity

For man who is endowed with the power of knowledge and self determination, the perception of the unity and difference in the realm of being takes on the character of a task, of a responsibility. As a being from and with other things, as one who cannot be or live even a moment without receiving from and interacting with other beings, man's being is essentially being-with, interaction, exchange. Once we realize how basic this is for our being and life, it is difficult not to feel a deep sense of solidarity with and gratitude to other realities. This is

not to deny or belittle the existence of conflict, competition, and struggle in the realm of being. Our relationship with the non-human beings is no exception to this. Only on the assumption that the whole world is there for man's sake, we can expect that things would have no conflict with us. But there is no evidence that would justify such an assumption. What we can—and should—do is to try to solve, as far as possible, the conflicts without violence and to develop peaceful, co-operative modes of living with other realities, as we try to do with other human beings. In individual cases, it may be inevitable to use a measure of force, say, to ward off a threat to one's life. However, it would be dangerous to absolutize this, as if conflict were the stuff of reality and man's life a struggle against nature (80:314, 486; 81:786; 82:1015). Conflict is only an aspect of the relationship between things which are related to and yet different from one another; it is neither "the father and lord of all things" (49: Frg B 53) nor "the basic policy of all living beings (102:550). The fact is that conflict has its place in the wider, more fundamental framework of the *being-with* of realities that we call the world and cannot be understood apart from it. For man who can know himself and other beings and thus *has to* actively *become* what he can be in and with the world, *being-with* assumes the character of solidarity, partnership, or love, attitudes which many religions and world-views consider as relevant in man-to-man relationships but which they fail to recognize as applicable also in relation to non-human realities, to the world as a whole.

Now, realities being not only similar and related to but also different from one another with their own particular and specific being, we cannot relate ourselves to different realities in one and the same way. There are as we know, not only relationships but also real differences between living and non-living beings, between vegetative and animal life, between man's self-determination and that of other animals, between one individual man, dog, or tree and another. It is, therefore, necessary that we take account of and respect these differences as well in our relationship with them. Our relationship with other human beings is, or has to be, largely on the basis of reciprocal communication. We relate ourselves to them not merely on the basis of what we know of or want from them, regardless of what they think and want, but rather taking account of what they think and

want as this is communicated to us especially through the medium of language. This is true in varying degrees of our relationship and interaction with other animals. We have now a better insight into the behaviour and language of other animals through the progress of ethology (61:84-95, 110-138; 62:148-211; 89:6-49), and this opens up the prospect of a more peaceful, co-operative relationship with these near relatives of ours in the realm of being. Our relationship with plants and non-living beings cannot be said to be on the basis of such a reciprocal communication. We interact with these in that we know what they are and how they act and react, and though this is conditioned by the way they are and the way they act and react, it cannot be said that they communicate with us or we with them as we do with other human beings or other animals. Yet, it would not be right to characterize, as J. Habermas does (34a:57, 61-65), our relationship with other human beings as interaction or communicative action and that with non-human beings as work or goal-oriented or instrumental action and contrast the one with the other. For in the first place, our relationship with non-human beings are not all of an instrumental character. Secondly, even non-living things, not to speak of living beings, are not altogether passive even when we use them instrumentally. In fact, things are *active* in their own way, and when we use them instrumentally, they are actively *co-operating* with what we do or aim at, though not in a free and conscious way as human beings do. Even non-living beings are in this sense *subjects*, as E. Bloch has rightly seen (9:802-813), and not merely *objects* of our activity. In work, in goal-oriented instrumental action, we need to discover and even respect the way, different realities exist, act and react; it is through co-ordinating and disconnecting things by taking account of their qualities and ways of acting and reacting that technology leading to processes and results that are not given in nature becomes possible. To describe this as man's craftiness forcing a "blind" or "unwilling" nature to turn against itself and work for man, as Hegel does, is more an expression of a lordly imperialistic attitude to the non-human world than of what technology as a whole has been or should be. The fact that the capitalistic understanding of technology betrays more the spirit of slave-keepers and the East India Company than friendship or co-operation (9:783) does not mean that man's technical relationship with the world should

necessarily be that of a master or exploiter. If it has taken the form of lordship and exploitation, this is due to an egoistic or anthropocentric approach to reality, and not the intrinsic nature of technology. As we have seen, rationality does not need to be domination or oppression and the use of things is not necessarily lordship over or exploitation of things.

Therefore, the alternative to the domination and exploitation of the non-human world is not to abstain from using things or to changing them in the process. For realities as we know are all more or less dynamic, active, interacting with, changed by and changing one another, and this is true of man's relationship with the rest of the world as well. We cannot live without using things, and without exercising, occasionally at least, a measure of power or control over things. To try to abstain from this would mean suicide, and even then we would not leave things completely unaffected. Therefore, the question is not whether we use things and change them in the process or not, but how we do it: whether we consider the realities we make use of as nothing more than a means for our self-realization, as if things had no value, meaning, or purpose except in relation to us and treat them accordingly, whether we try to dominate, misuse, plunder, even destroy things, especially other animals and plants, as if we were the lords and masters of the whole world. What we can and should do as worldly realities that can relate themselves in a knowing and free manner to the rest of the world is to view and value other beings for what they are, and not exclusively in terms of what they mean for us, and to extend our solidarity and partnership to the whole of reality. Even the setbacks, difficulties and conflicts we encounter in our dealings with things take on a new aspect once we realize how indebted we are to the world for our life and activity. In the perspective of solidarity man's self realization is as much world-realization and this can give us a sense of equanimity and inner freedom which the anthropocentric ideal of world-domination cannot give.

2. Practical alternatives

There is no use professing an abstract, general solidarity with all beings as long as we do not or cannot translate it into the reality of our day-to-day life. We have seen that the practical realization of the anthropocentric ideal of world-

domination has not only liberating but also oppressive, alienating consequences for man's own life. In fact, it is becoming more and more clear that without a radical change in our attitudes toward and dealings with the world, not only man's welfare but also the survival of life on earth is in danger. Now, our relationships with the world is as much social as individual, and so a change in our relationship with the non-human world is not possible without a change in the relationship with fellow human beings. We can indicate here only a few areas that call for radical changes in our outlook and way of living and acting.

An important area or aspect of our relationship with other beings, human and non-human, is what we call economy, the production and sharing of goods. In capitalism - and capitalism is not wholly a modern phenomenon (78:274f.) - the production and distribution of goods is governed by the laws of the market, except of course, where the state is called upon to intervene to protect or stabilize this supposedly autonomous area. In the market economy, it is not so much what people *really* need but the profit which the wealthy, powerful individuals or sections seek to make that determines the production and distribution of commodities. And things are valued not in terms of what they are or even what they really mean for man's self-realization but in terms of their price in the market. The assumption is that the economy cannot manage without being spurred on by greed, envy, and egoism on the part of individuals and that the competitive interplay of individual interests would ultimately regulate the production of goods to the advantage of all (101:21). In these circumstances, it is not surprising that economists and entrepreneurs pay little or no attention to whether the profit a private enterprise makes is proportionate to the costs it causes to the society as a whole, whether it squanders the limited, especially non-regenerable resources of nature, whether it pollutes the environment and upsets the eco-system that supports life including our own. In fact, the expectation that the individualistic, competitive, profit-based economy would organize the production and distribution of goods and services to the advantage of all is the result of an illusion. We need only to think of the oppression and exploitation the capitalistic economic expansion has brought and still brings to large sections of the world's population and

the alienating consequences it has for even those materially profiting from its gains. Therefore, as E. F. Schumacher rightly emphasizes, we need to develop a new economics and a new economic practice that would organize the production and distribution of goods in a spirit of co-operation with one another rather than profit-oriented individualistic competition (101:42-56). An economy which aims at catering for the real needs of the people rather than the suggested imaginary ones or the luxury of the privileged few would be in a position to use the worldly realities, especially the living, feeling and conscious beings with respect, caring for and as far as possible enhancing their being rather than subduing, exploiting, or plundering them.

A first step toward a new and more human economic practice is that people learn to resist the hypnotizing propaganda of modern, profit oriented industries. People need to realize that life's happiness does not consist in *having* or possessing more and more things, as the industry suggests, but in *being* more, in growing in knowledge and freedom, in developing communion and fellowship with others (28:36-54). The desire to possess, have or consume as much as possible is by no means a sign of freedom or growth. In fact, many forms of modern consumption promote only passivity and sluggishness (28:170f.). The ceaseless run after novelty and change is often the result of an inner disquiet and a flight from the self, a means to avoid coming close to oneself or to others. If the people realize this and lay more value in *being* rather than *having*, possessing and consuming more and more, the economy cannot continue its plundering of nature or its exploitation of human beings by creating imaginary needs which it can then with profit satisfy.

Another aspect of man's relationship with the world that requires revision is technology, an integral part of the man-to-man and man-to-the-world relationship we call economy. In modern times, the development and application of technology have been governed largely by abstract economic considerations like profit or expansion or by the equally abstract belief that technological innovations would somehow be able to solve all of man's problems. This is the case with the development of technology in order to achieve a maximum of productivity with a

minimum of costs or with the tendency to develop and apply all that is technically possible without considering whether this does violence to man and nature, creating unnecessary conflicts between man and man and between man and the non-human world. We need, therefore, as L. Mumford rightly insists (212-294) to free ourselves from the myth of the machine and develop a new understanding of technology based on a co-operative relationship with all the forces of nature and with our fellow human beings. There are now several interesting proposals towards the creation of a new technology. E. F. Schumacher's idea of an *intermediary technology* would remind one of the Gandhian ideal of economy and technology (101:133-145). In fact, Schumacher is indebted to Gandhi (101:139f.), and it is significant that he christens his proposal for a basically human, ethical, non-violent economy- 'Buddhist economy' (101:48-56). Schumacher's Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) in London aims at developing a "middle" technology adapted and accessible to the ordinary man, especially in the 'developing' countries, a technology which is basically small, simple, cheap, relatively non-violent toward man and nature, and which is adapted to suit genuine human measure (101:29-32, 156-171). The emphasis of the *soft technology* proposed by R. Clarke, P. Harper and others, is not so much on taming the "old technology" as on creating a new technology which is more friendly to man and nature (51:42f., 56-58). Such a technology would respect nature's overall biological context and would try as far as possible, to fit into its cyclic rhythms. Thus, the accent is on developing natural, non-violent methods in agriculture, on evolving ways of production that would need only a modest quantum of material and energy, on re-using "used" goods by the process of recycling instead of throwing them away or destroying them. In this perspective, attention is given to technologies and materials now discarded as 'primitive' with a view to exploring whether these can fulfil the requirements of a soft technology of a humane, non-violent approach to and relationship with the non-human world. "There are building materials which have been discarded as 'too primitive' or are used only rarely.... Increased efforts should be made to utilize the 'old' sources of energy. Besides the sun, water and wind, the tapping of bio-thermal fountains is suggested In food production, attention is to be given not only to a return to the organic manuring.

methods but also to experiments with 'hydroponics' (the growing of plants in nutrient water) and to attempts at producing protein from leaves and other parts of the plants considered une-dible till now" (51:50f.). The next stage is to search for new inventions or to develop them inasmuch as they are already there germinally. This should include among other things: "the development of efficient solar cells and solar power stations, 'soft' printing techniques like xerography, better methods for the production of quality steel in small quantities, more economic methods for the reutilization of waste, improvement of the durability of natural fibres, new cooling techniques, and so on" (51:51). We may add to this list the gaining of biogas from organic waste. A small biogas plant utilizing the dung from two to four cows or oxen can supply the energy a family needs for household purposes, and the remaining decayed waste can be saved as high-quality manure for agriculture (59:92-102; 109:160-162). In fact, in countries like India and China, small biogas plants are already in operation. Thus, soft technology is not only less violent and more friendly to man and nature, it is also more adapted to the needs of the 'developing' countries (51:46f.; 53). Unlike the 'hard' technology with its emphasis on expensive, labour saving heavy machinery, the instruments and machines of the soft technology are cheap, easy to handle, and labour intensive and so specially suited to 'developing' countries with a surplus of man power. Besides, the alternative forms of energy—solar energy, wind, biogas etc. which the soft technology advocates are less expensive and more easily accessible to the people of these countries than fossile energy.

The attempts to develop alternative technologies are not so isolated as they would appear at first sight. There are now numerous groups in different parts of the Western world which refuse to conform to the individualistic, violently competitive, consumerist ways of the capitalistic society (77:11-35). Without waiting for the collapse of oppressive, alienating structures and mechanisms of the society, these groups try to evolve and practise already now alternative forms of economy, technology, and social life aiming at solidary, partnerlike relationships with other human beings and with the non-human realities. Although they cannot hope to achieve any radical transformation of the society at large, the alternative movements are right in perceiv-

ing that individuals and groups are not so helpless as they seem to be but can do something already now to change their life and that of others without waiting for the reform of the society. To the majority of their fellow human beings, the alternative movements constitute a challenge in that they show that other forms of life are possible, that the practice of solidarity and partnership is in reality more life-fulfilling than the domination and exploitation.

The alternative movements are not all wholly free from a certain anthropocentrism, their concern is often mainly or solely the survival and well-being of mankind. Yet, as a whole they are invariably less violent and more solidary in relation to the world, to all living and non-living realities. They can, therefore, be partners in our attempt to develop a more partnerlike relationship with the rest of the world in place of the anthropocentric domination and exploitation of the non-human realities. The problem is whether any appreciable improvement in our relationship with one another and with the non-human realities is possible without radical changes in the socio-political set up and whether those who wield power and influence would accept the need for such changes (23:13f.). It will not be easy for the richer nations and for the richer sections in other countries to give up even a part of the wealth and power they have come to possess as a result of the unprecedented domination and exploitation of nature made possible through modern science and legitimized by the anthropocentric ideology. The working classes of the richer nations have now acquired a share in the material prosperity resulting from modern economic expansion and they cannot be said to constitute a potential for revolutionary change. And politicians are not likely to risk the displeasure of their electorate by introducing laws or reforms that would bring about radical changes in the mechanisms of domination and exploitation in man-to-man or man-to-the-world relationships. In this situation, those wielding power cannot be made to act unless we succeed in mobilizing public opinion in favour of more human, value-oriented, solidary relationships between man and man and between man and the non-human realities in economic and technological pursuits. Groups that would actively, though peacefully, resist the creation or perpetuation of oppressive, alienating economic policies and technologies, as the example of citizens' initiatives against the construction of nuclear power stations in West Germany show, can also prove effective. Even the 'developing' nations are not wholly helpless in this matter. They can do something to persuade the richer or industrialized nations of the world to change the policy of plundering nature and of wasting raw materials and

energy for the profit and luxury of a minority of the world's population (30:89-112). For the richer and powerful sections in these nations have been able to dominate, exploit and plunder the world of nature and other human beings and still manage to do so in varying degrees largely because they have been able to appropriate and utilize the resources, material and human, of those countries that now constitute the so-called 'Third World' (84:254-350). By refusing to deliver the quantities of raw materials and energy which the capitalist economy requires to cater for the inflated needs of the consumer society, the 'developing' nations will be persuading their 'developed' partners to revise the lordly, oppressive, exploitative relationship patterns which they have come to develop toward the world, human as well as non-human, and which have alienating consequences for their own people. For this, however, the developing nations will have to evolve a new understanding of development according to which human fulfilment would consist in growing in knowledge and freedom, in practising solidarity and communion with fellow human beings and with the non-human world, and not in the consumerist domination of nature or the exploitation of other human beings. It is in this way, and not slavishly copying the capitalist, consumerist ways of the developed nations that the peoples of Africa, Asia, and South America can be true to what is genuinely true and noble in their own traditions and enter into a relationship of partnership rather than of dependence with the Western world.

It goes without saying that such radical changes in outlook and life, whether in industrial nations or in developing countries, require the creation of a new awareness, of a new feeling of solidarity toward all beings (3:178-182). Philosophers and theologians can play a modest part in the creation of a *new enlightenment* that would stress as much what unites man with the rest of the world as what differentiates him from it. Most religions and world views we know have some idea or insight that could help us to evolve a more solidary, partnerlike attitude to and relationship with the whole world, human as well as non-human. In this respect, we may learn, critically of course, from animism as well as Taoism, from Buddha as well as Marx and Gandhi. Christian theology can participate in this process of enlightenment if it succeeds in extending Jesus' teaching of neighbourliness to the whole world, including non-human beings. For this, however, it will have to criticize and correct Christianity's anthropocentric bias rather than try to cover it with apologetic re-interpretations.

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Life 'after' Death: Individual Survival or Universal Communion?

"Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life will preserve it" (Lk 17:33).

Immortality, whether thought of as belonging to man or hoped for as a boon from a gracious God, is an integral aspect of man's self-understanding. In philosophical considerations and religious thought, we find a variety of models to think about immortality, ranging from the immortal soul of Plato to the bodily resurrection of the Christian belief on the one side, and the Hindu conception of soul's absorption into Brahman and the Buddhist theory of *nirvana* on the other. All these models have their own world-understanding with an implied anthropology as well as theology. Thus, while the dualistic type of anthropologies like that of Plato tend to emphasize the spiritual substance, the soul, attributing to it an immortality which is denied to the body, the less dualistic kind of anthropologies like that of the Bible hope also for a continuation of the bodily reality as necessary for man's immortality. Now, the fact that immortality, either as the survival of the soul alone or also as including the resurrection of the body, is considered to be an exclusive prerogative of the human being implies an understanding of man's reality in contrast to the rest of the world. That this one-sided emphasis on human being and the anthropocentric attitudes consequent upon it are neither warranted nor healthy is becoming increasingly evident from what we know of reality today and from what we experience as the present human situation. (For more details about an alternative to the anthropocentric understanding of man, and a corresponding possible way of life, see the other articles in this issue of *Jeevadhara*).

In this article I shall attempt to suggest a perspective of immortality in keeping with a more dynamic anthropology which, without belittling man's importance and dignity, would view

him as organically related to the world, and as sharing in the finiteness and contingency of all that comes into being, becomes, and perishes in time.

In quest of immortality

Man's concern with death and its aftermath is as old as mankind itself. In fact, human beings are unique "in being aware that they themselves and all their living contemporaries are going to die, and that death has already overtaken countless earlier generations...."¹ This self-awareness, together with the power of reflection to go beyond the present moment both to the past as well as to the future, seems to have turned the natural fact of death to a real problem for man's self-understanding, requiring an explanation and a solution. For, as Alfred North Whitehead has rightly remarked, "rational life refuses to conceive itself as a transient enjoyment, transiently useful",² and the "higher intellectual feelings are haunted by the vague insistence of another order, where there is no unrest, no travel, no shipwreck: 'There shall be no more sea.'"³

Thus if we trace back in history we find, especially among the peoples whose self-understanding seems to rely more on what separates the human being from the non-human rather than on what unites them, a two-fold approach to the problem of death: the rationalization of death, on the one hand, and the attempt to overcome it through the beliefs in, and rituals for, a life after death, on the other. Now, the rationalization of the fact of death by attributing its origin either to a decree of the gods or to some accidental events of history, or to the fault of man himself has the implication that man was originally meant to be immortal, a boon which he unfortunately lost for ever. From the point of view of the history of ideas, therefore, the primary meaning of immortality seems to be a life *without* death and not a life *after* death. Immortality as life *after* death has then to be seen as the second best solution in the face of death's inevitability.

1. A. Toynbee, "Man's Concern with Life After Death", in *Life After Death*, A. Toynbee, A. Koestler *et al.* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), p. 3.

2. A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Macmillan, 1929) p. 516.

3. *Ibid.*

It is interesting to note that the rationalization of death as to how it became man's lot began to find expression in powerful myths early enough in the history of more than one people. The ancient Mesopotamians, for example, attributed the fact of death to a decree of the gods who allotted death to mankind, retaining life in their keeping.⁴ Frazer classifies the stories about how death became man's lot found in other primitive cultures as well, under two heads: "The Story of the Perverted Message", and "The Story of the Cast Skin".⁵ These stories suggest variants of the same basic explanation. The stories of the 'perverted message' attribute the origin of death to the perversion of the good news by the messengers who were sent by Moon or some other Deity to announce to man the glad tidings of immortality.⁶ These messengers are mostly non-human creatures like hares, dogs, or snakes.⁷ Any way, the basic scheme in all such tales is the same: "God at one time purposed to make mankind immortal, but... the benevolent scheme miscarried through the fault of the messenger to whom he had entrusted the gospel message."⁸

The rationalization of death which implies its unacceptability as a natural fact would consequently lead to finding out means to escape its clutches. This is how we can understand the enormous evidence of the ancient burial practices unearthed from the ancient tombs by archaeological excavations. Many primitive peoples took great care to bury their dead with the provisions for a life beyond the grave, which included, besides food and drink, also ornaments, flowers⁹, weapons¹⁰, chariots,

4. Cf. *Epic of Gilgamesh*, tabl. X, iii, 1-5: transl., A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 70.

5. Cf. J. G. Frazer, *Folk-lore in Old Testament*, vols 3 (London: Macmillan, 1919), I, p. 52.

6. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 52-65.

7. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-55.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

9. Cf. D. F. Jonas, "Life, Death, Awareness, and Concern: A Progression", *Life After Death*, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

10. Cf. *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vols 12 + 5 vols of Plates, J. B. Bury *et al.* eds (Cambridge: The University Press, 1923-39), III, p. 452.

and even servants.¹¹ The conviction behind such burial practices was evidently that the dead would continue to live elsewhere with more or less the same needs as they had in this life. There is evidence that such elaborate burials were common among the ancient Mesopotamians. It is also of interest for us to know that the beliefs and burial practices among the ancient Hebrews were not different. Evaluating the evidences of burials at Gezer and Bethshemesh, during the Hebrew period (1000-600 B.C.), Duncan arrives at the following conclusion:

The early Hebrew ideas of immortality and of the future life appear, therefore, to be the same as prevailed in Egypt, Babylonia, and among the Canaanites around them, so far as we can judge from their burial customs.¹²

The Pyramids of Egypt and the inscriptions on their walls form another set of evidence for man's untiring efforts to secure immortality.¹³ Besides, they also bear witness to the fact that the life beyond death was conceived as a continuation of this life with more or less the same needs and wishes as in this life. For example, the inscription on the tomb of Herkhuf (c. 2350-2200 B.C.) contains a request to the passers-by to wish the dead an abundance of food and drink:

O ye living, who are upon earth, [who shall pass by this tomb whether] going down-stream or going up stream, who shall say: "A thousand loaves, a thousand jars of beer for the owner of this tomb"; I will [—] for their sakes in the nether world. I am an excellent, equipped spirit, a ritual priest, whose mouth knows.¹⁴

11. Cf. C. L. Woolley, *Ur of the Chaldees: A Record of Seven Years of Excavation* (London: Ernest Benn, 1930) pp. 45ff.

12. J. J. Duncan, *Digging up Biblical History: Recent Archaeology in Palestine and its Bearing on the Old Testament Historical Narratives*, vols 2 (London: SPCK, 1931, I, p. 168.

13. For a translation of the Pyramid Texts, see R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

14. J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, vols 5 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1906), I, pp. 151-52.

What is of special interest for us here is the fact that in the Judeo-Christian traditions too we find a basically similar pattern with regard to the development of the belief in a life beyond death. On the first pages of the Bible we have Adam and Eve, the first parents of the human race, and the story of their fall is in substance the biblical man's rationalization of the tragedy of death which befalls every one without exception.¹⁵ The implication of the Genesis story of man's fall seems to be that if the first parents had not sinned, men and women would not have to die at all.

Thus the Genesis story indicates that death was equally a problem for the Israelites, as it was the case elsewhere. And as pointed out above, there is evidence to hold that the Hebrew tribes too shared the after-life beliefs which were generally prevalent around them. But how is it then that the Old Testament seems to know of an after-life only much later? It is in fact a long story, political as well as religious, the complexity of which would refuse any summary presentation. However, some bare outlines could be pointed out.

Following the conquest of Canaan towards the end of the thirteenth century B.C.,¹⁶ we see the rise of Yahwism in Israel, which was, amongst others, a nationalistic movement in order to strengthen the unity of the Israelite nation under the war-god Yahweh.¹⁷ To reach this goal, Yahwism had to fight against polytheism and therefore also against the after-life beliefs and the related practices like the mortuary cult and ancestor worship,¹⁸ which were associated with other deities.¹⁹ who were the rivals of Yahweh. As monotheism grew in strength, Yahwism could succeed, to a great extent, though not completely, in suppressing the after-life beliefs as well as the related practices.

Naturally, Yahwism had to find other solutions to the problem of death, and what it offered, instead, was a this-worldly life and its blessings. A death in an old age with one's

15. Cf. Gen 3; Rom 5: 12.

16. Cf. J. Bright, *A History of Israel* (London: SCM Press, 1972) p. 134.

17. Cf. Charles, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

18. Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

19. Cf. Brandon, *Man and His Destiny in the Great Religions*, p. 120.

sons assembled around was proposed as the supreme desirable thing.²⁰ Thus a long life was considered to be the reward of the good, and the wicked were punished with a short life: "The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short."²¹ The same was true also with regard to the nation as a whole; if it remained faithful to the Lord and obeyed his commandments, it would be rewarded with political victory and peaceful reign, otherwise punished with defeat and captivity at the hands of enemies.

Thus, although apparently "for centuries . . . the belief in Yahweh could be practised meaningfully without the assertion of a transcendent, post-historical and final fulfilment",²² it seems that the solution offered by Yahwism could not hold out for ever against the facts of experience. Innocent sufferings of individuals as exemplified in the case of Job, and of the nation as it happened in the Babylonian captivity, falsified the logic of the Yahwist theory, and the Israelite nation fell into great depression. People began to ask: "Why has the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us? What is our iniquity? What is the sin that we have committed against the Lord our God?"²³ Others bitterly complained that "the way of the Lord is not just."²⁴ From this depressive situation, there began to shine forth the first glimmerings of a new hope in the vision of Ezekiel.²⁵ Although Ezekiel's vision referred primarily to the whole nation, its imagery was significant on the individual level too inasmuch as it suggested the idea of a physical resurrection. Later we see that the belief in a bodily resurrection became generally established in Israel.²⁶ The apocalyptic vision of Daniel that "many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt",²⁷ and Isaiah's vision of "the New Heavens and the

20. Cf. Gen 25: 8; 49: 33.

21. Prov. 10: 27.

22. E. Schillebeeckx, "Some Thoughts on the Interpretation of Eschatology", *Concilium* 1, 5 (dogma), 1969, p. 26.

23. Jer 16: 10.

24. Ezek 18: 25.

25. Cf. Ezek 37: 1ff.

26. Cf. 2 Mac 12: 38-45.

27. Dan 12: 2.

New Earth" (Cf. Is 65: 17; 66: 22; cf. also Rev 21:1) further corroborated the hope of a bodily resurrection.

In the New Testament, for those who accepted Jesus as the Messiah, the Jewish expectation focused itself around him, and he was proclaimed the Saviour. The basic point of the Christological doctrine, especially in its Pauline version, and the key-note of the Christian sacraments is ultimately the overcoming of death. From this point of view, Christianity could be said to share an important characteristic with the mystery religions which celebrated death and resurrection in their mystery cults. Thus there is some truth, especially from a psychological point of view, in attributing the success of Christianity to the fact that

it, too, featured a healer with supernatural powers who had risen from the dead. The great triumph of Easter is the joyful shout "Christ has risen!", an echo of the same joy that the devotees of the mystery cults enacted at their ceremonies of the victory over death. These cults... were an attempt to attain "an immunity bath" from the greatest evil: death and the dread of it.²⁸

The nature of the life after death as conceived in the Judeo-Christian traditions also deserves attention. The vision of Ezekiel and Daniel was that the Israelite nation would be restored here on earth, and in Isaiah's kingdom one would still need to build homes to dwell in (Is 65:22). In the gospels we see the risen Lord eating food to prove his *post-mortem* reality before his disciples (Cf. Lk 24:41-43). One of the powerful imageries which Jesus employs to describe the existence in the kingdom of God is that of a sumptuous banquet (Cf. Mt 22:1ff). The apocalyptic imagery in John's *Revelation* also employs this-worldly categories inasmuch as it too envisions 'the new heavens and the new earth' where there would be no suffering, no tears, and no mourning (Rev 21:1ff). Thus the ideas of the bodily resurrection as well as of the kingdom of God in Judeo-Christian traditions, despite all spiritualizations (Cf. 1 Cor

28. E. Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: Free Press, 1973) p. 12.

15:35f.) seem to be in line with the ancient widespread belief that life after death is a kind of continuation of the present life.

Our short survey, in fact, is intended to show that at the root of man's beliefs in a life beyond death, there lies a certain self-understanding of man which did not really succeed in integrating also the fact of death. This could be traced back to the anthropocentric self-affirmation of man for which a significant example is the creation-narrative of the Bible. According to Whitehead, this attitude of man is due to the persistence of the initial excess of subjectivity which is a selective emphasis obscuring the totality. This is bound to occur in the course of any becoming but need to be corrected - a task of reason - in order to recover the perspective of totality. By way of transition to the following section, it is well to point out here that an anthropology which is based on the excessive stress on the subjectivity of man, and which, therefore, sees man apart from the rest of the universe, would also look for an immortality different from the immortality implied in an integral vision of man and the universe.

Objective immortality

In fact, the less anthropocentric world views seem to have a different understanding of immortality, howsoever elementary and primitive this may be. What I have in mind by way of example is some trends in the Indian, and Chinese thought on the matter as expressed in the scriptures of the respective cultures as well as manifest in the life of those peoples. The attitude of the Vedic man towards death can be pointed out as an example from ancient India. For the Vedic man the fact of death as such is not a disturbing problem; death becomes tragic only when life is snatched away before one reaches maturity, before one has lived one's life-span. In this case death is an accident, a misfortune, an unnatural event, *akāla mṛtyu*. But for the one who has lived his life-span, one's *āyus*, death is not a tragedy; he is not considered to die, because he does not experience a rupture: "he has simply consumed the torch and exhausted the fuel. The flame of his life goes on and it burns in his sons, his daughters, his children's children, his friends, his work, and in his ideas which are scattered to

the four winds...."²⁹ This open and relaxed attitude to death is to be attributed to the priority of the community-consciousness, the consciousness of solidarity, over against the emphasis on individuality and isolation.³⁰ A similar outlook existed also in the ancient China, according to which the dead were believed to return to the common undifferentiated 'family substance' from where the new-born received their being. The dead were thought to disincarnate and disappear into the familial soil, and the new-born were considered to be the re-incarnations of the disincarnated ancestors, reappearing in the living portion of the family.³¹

In the modern times too, the less anthropocentrically oriented thinkers – among them also historians, humanists, poets, and mystics – seem to have overcome the anthropocentric view of immortality as isolated survival and perpetuation of one's own ego. A. Toynbee, for example, believes "that at death a human being's soul is re-absorbed into the suprapersonal spiritual presence behind the universe."³² For him the personal human individuality is temporal, the value of which consists in this that it allows one to live among other temporary personalities whom one loves, and to acquire personal achievements which have, however, value only "in so far as they are of some good to other people."³³ According to Erich Fromm the craving for a continuation of life after death is the result of an unwholesome ego-centricity.³⁴ Poets like Hölderlin longed

29. R. Panikkar, *The Vedic Experience: An Anthology of the Vedas for Modern Man and Contemporary Celebration*, edited and translated with introduction and notes (London: Longman & Todd, 1977), p. 533.

30. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 535-36.

31. Cf. M. Granet, *La Religion des Chinois* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1951), p. 23-24.

32. A. Toynbee, *Surviving the Future* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 54.

33. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

34. E. Fromm, *To Have or To Be?* (London: Abacus, 1979), p. 127.

for a return to the Unity, to the All, in order to attain self-fulfilment.³⁵

For our further reflections, we could perhaps sum up the different views on immortality under two categories: subjective and objective immortality, without overlooking the limitations of all such categorizations. Here, subjective immortality would point to the view that a person will somehow survive death and will go on for ever consciously experiencing either joy or pain; it could be the soul alone, or the soul as reunited with the resurrected body. Whereas objective immortality³⁶ lays more emphasis on the imperishability of what has been achieved, rather than on a continuation of conscious experience beyond the point of death.

The concept of objective immortality is important in an organic and dynamic view of the universe as one Whole where every detail enters into relationship with every other detail,³⁷ and the final actuality is conceived to be through and through togetherness of all actualities,³⁸ in such a way that there could be nothing that requires nothing else for its own existence.³⁹ Here, unity and relationship are the primary categories, without minimizing multiplicity and individuality. It is a cosmological outlook, which, having also the modern physics and relativity theories in its favour, describes the ultimate units of reality in terms of events or 'occasions of experience' rather than of particles. According to modern physics, matter is not something that occupies a volume of space through a period of time, but is

35. F. Hölderlin, "Hyperion oder Eremit in Griechenland", in *Hölderlin: Werke und Briefe*, vols 3 (F. Beissner und J. Schmidt, hrg., Frankfurt a. M.: Insel Verlag, 1969), I, p. 297. Cf. also H. Hesse, *Siddhartha: Eine indische Dichtung* (Frankfurt a. M.: Bibliothek Suhrkamp, 1969, first published 1922), p. 118.

36. This is a concept taken from the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead and its meaning has to be understood within the context of his philosophy of organism; see A. Cloots' article in this issue of *Jeevadhara*.

37. Cf. A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Free Press, 1967, first published 1926), p. 25.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

39. Cf. A. N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1927), p. 94.

more like a 'local irregularity', or a 'local wrinkling', or a 'local curvature' of time-space.⁴⁰ Accordingly, the universe is a dynamic interrelated Whole constantly in the process of becoming; becoming implies multiplicity and change which should be understood not in isolation, but as polar characteristics of the Whole-in-becoming, the other pole being unity and permanence. For it is part of our deeper experience that there are permanent elements in the universe, "by reason of which there is a stable order in the world, permanent elements apart from which there could be no changing world."⁴¹ It is our perception of the aspect of permanence in the midst of the constant flux that opens our minds towards the realization that our existence is more than a succession of bare facts, a series of diverse experiences. A still deeper insight would apprehend that "beyond such happiness and such pleasure there remains the function of what is actual and passing, that it contributes its quality as an immortal fact to the order which informs the world."⁴² Here an aspect of the meaning of what we called objective immortality is evident inasmuch as the mortal and the passing can contribute its quality to the immortal aspect of the universe.

In the organic conception of the universe, therefore' immortality and mortality are polar attributes of the Whole rather than isolated prerogatives of individuals. And since man is a part of the universe, organically related to it for his being, which is a becoming, his immortality too has to be understood in relation to the Whole and not in isolation from it as a kind of static survival beyond the frontiers of the universe.

Another way of making the concept of objective immortality comprehensible is to explain it in terms of value. Though a concrete existent is temporal and perishable, its value is indestructible and eternal. As far as a human being is concerned, its existence in the concreteness of temporality and subjectivity would come to an end at death; but the value of the human person and of his achievements are not destroyed but is preserved in creation actively and dynamically. Hence, the immortality of man is, in a way, "a side issue in the wider topic which

40. Cf. M. Capek, *The Philosophical Impact of Contemporary Physics* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1961), p. 390.

41. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, preface.

42. Ibid. p. 68.

is the immortality of realized value..., the temporality of mere fact acquiring the immortality of value".⁴³ The immortality of realized value is something alive and dynamic inasmuch as the values of the past influence positively or negatively the on-going process of the universe. Process does not happen in a vacuum; it needs the data from the past. In more simple terms, the living appropriates the dead in its becoming, or the dead becomes objectively immortal in the living. My past till just the previous moment of the present experience has perished and is no more actual; however, not vanished, but has become objectively immortal in the present moment. Similarly, at death the sequence of experiences that constituted my self from the moment of my origination will come to an end, acquiring thereby an objective value capable of influencing for better or for worse the other sequences of experiences in the concrete on-going world.

For a richer and more comprehensive meaning, the concept of objective immortality needs to be related to the reality of God, the all-encompassing reality, the ground of order and the "lure" towards the future. We can then truly say that the value of our being and of our temporal existence and endeavour is assumed and made everlasting in God's being. Biblical scholars and theologians are wont to speak of man's final fulfilment in terms of communion with God. That is a good point and can be explained in terms of our objective immortality in God. On the contrary, a communion with God in terms of subjective immortality would create more problems than it appears at first sight.

Objective immortality is indeed personal immortality, and it keeps everything of the traditional doctrine of immortality, except perhaps the continuation of the present sequence of conscious subjective experiences. The reason is that, if death is real, it is an end of the particular sequence of experiences and time-duration, and therefore, there is no 'time' and no becoming or sequence of subjective experiences beyond death. For death precisely means the termination of that time-duration and the sequence of experiences associated with it. However, as it has

43. A. N. Whitehead, "Immortality", in *The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead*, P. A. Schilpp, ed. (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1951), p. 688.

been made clear, this does not mean the annihilation of our reality. We perish, but live for ever more—this is the sum and substance of Whitehead's theory of objective immortality. How Whitehead thought of this 'living for ever' is somewhat evident in what he said about a month before his own death:

God is *in* the world, or nowhere, creating continually in us and around us. This creative principle is everywhere, in animate and so-called inanimate matter, in the ether, water, earth, human hearts. But this creation is a continuing process, and 'the process is itself the actuality', since no sooner do you arrive than you start on a fresh journey. In so far as man partakes of this creative process does he partake of the divine, of God, and that participation is his immortality, reducing the question of whether his individuality survives the death of the body to the estate of an irrelevancy. His true destiny as cocreator in the universe is his dignity and his grandeur.⁴⁴

In short, the concept of objective immortality points to man's dignity and value in terms of his participation in the ongoing creative advance of the universe, in contrast to a static and isolated perpetuation of his individuality.

Objective immortality and Christian faith

Now, the question is whether this perspective is compatible with Christian faith. A positive answer seems to emerge from the theological awareness of today, especially in connection with the attempts to re-interpret the the eschatological perspectives of Christianity which are based on the biblical view of 'last things'. There are in fact several attempts at a re-interpretation of the biblical eschatology in recent times, most of which do not seem to go farther than a certain socialization or "politicization" of the meaning of the eschatological assertions themselves. However, among the theologians who gave some serious thought to this problem K. Rahner's insights seem to come closer to the perspective of

44. L. Price, *Dialogues of Alfred North Whitehead* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1954), p. 370.

objective immortality, and hence are useful from this point of view, for a critical overcoming of the anthropologism implied in Christian eschatology.

Dealing with the problem of the 'life of the dead',⁴⁵ Rahner makes it clear that he does *not* mean a continuation of life with its peculiar distraction and the vagueness of temporal existence beyond death, as if one need only change the horses and ride further on. From this point of view, death is a *Nullpunkt*—a zero point—⁴⁶ which sets an end to the *whole* person.⁴⁷ It is interesting to note further that Rahner's rejection of a continuation of life beyond the point of death is based on the nature of time. A continued experiential life of the soul beyond death would imply a certain 'timeness' which will create insurmountable problems of thought, and it is also not what is meant by fulfilment.⁴⁸ Eternity, according to Rahner, is not to be understood in terms of time—as an infinite duration of it, however one may purify the notion of time. On the contrary, Rahner understands it as a mode of spirit and freedom (*Geistigkeit und Freiheit*) which are brought to fulfilment in time. In short, eternity he defines as the mature fruit of time as far as personality and freedom are concerned.⁴⁹ In fact, Rahner admits that it is not easy to imagine what is meant by the 'mature fruit of time'. Here he points to the need of thinking in a demythologized way, i. e., without the aid of visual images as in modern physics. Then it would make sense in saying that "through death—not after it—*there is* (not: begins to take place) the achieved definitiveness of the freely matured existence of man." In short, "what has come to be, is there as the hard-won and untrammelled validity of what was once temporal."⁵⁰ The key-

45. Cf. K. Rahner, "Das Leben der Toten", *Schriften zur Theologie*, up to now 13 vols (Einsiedeln: Benziger Verlag, 1954ff; hereafter abbreviated to SchTh), IV (1960), pp. 429-437.

46. Cf. Rahner, *Grundkurs des Glaubens: Einführung in den Begriff des Christentums* (Freiburg: Herder, 1976; hereafter referred to as *Grundkurs*), p. 417.

47. SchTh, IV, p. 429.

48. SchTh, IV, p. 429-30.

49. SchTh, IV, p. 430.

50. SchTh, IV, p. 430; for translation see Rahner, *Theological Investigations* IV, London: Longman & Todd, 1966, p. 348.

point which Rahner seems to emphasize here is the 'definitiveness' achieved in death, and its indestructible validity; as indestructible, it is immortal. These categories of Rahner evidently verge upon the perspective of objective immortality. Further, the significance of objective immortality consists in this that every achieved definitiveness forms the basis of the ongoing cosmic process, a point which also Rahner attempts to explicitate through his theory of the pancosmic relationship of the soul with the world.⁵¹

It may be on the basis of this theoretical clarification as to what 'life after death' could possibly mean when it is de-mythologized, that Rahner attempts to de-apocalyptize' the eschatological assertions of the Bible. But here he seems to have also another concern: to save the word of the Bible. For this he introduces a twist of perspective in the meaning of the eschatological assertions. Accordingly, he argues that one should understand eschatology as an extrapolation of the present implications of faith into the future, and not as an interpolation of the future into the present, which is apocalyptic.⁵² In other words, biblical eschatology should not be understood as a report of the future events but as an anticipated glimpse into the future fulfilment on the basis of the present experience of salvation.⁵³ Rahner, well-aware of the problems, uses also very general concepts and an uncommitted idiom to talk of heaven, hell and resurrection. He describes heaven as the happy definitiveness and fulfilment of the human being graced by God's self-communication,⁵⁴ resurrection as the sound definitiveness of the human person as a whole;⁵⁵ hell, on the contrary, as freedom's possibility of an absolute perdition.⁵⁶

Although Rahner speaks of the 'present experience of salvation' and its full measure in the eschatological times as well as of the definitiveness of the human person achieved in death, he does not seem to explicitate further these complex of cate-

51. Cf. Rahner, *Zur Theologie des Todes* (Freiburg: Herder, 1958), p. 18ff.

52. SchTh, IV, p. 418.

53. SchTh, IV, pp. 414-15; cf. also *Grundkurs*, p. 414.

54. Rahner, *Grundkurs*, p. 418.

55. SchTh, IV, p. 435.

56. Rahner, *Grundkurs*, p. 418.

gories. From the point of view of an integral vision of man and world, however, the experience of salvation could be interpreted as the realization of man's relation to and rootedness in the larger reality, the Whole, and the experience of belongingness, of peace and harmony resulting therefrom, and the joy when one accepts consciously and responsibly this world-relatedness and communion. Our alienation and estrangement from others and from the rest of reality is in fact our damnation, our hell. And according to Fromm, there is only one way to save ourselves from this hell: "to leave the prison of our ego-centricity, to reach out and to *one* ourselves with the world."⁵⁷ This implies, for sure, a going beyond one's own individuality, and its interest, both in understanding and attitude, on the one hand, and in life and behaviour, on the other. The realization of this transcendental dimension which is integral to our being is the purpose of all immortality-talk according to Ramsey. For him, the immortality-talk and the arguments in favour of it are like stories or disclosure models which have to be 'told' till one reaches the disclosure that we are *more* than "our biochemical reactions, our organic processes, our behaviour responses, our social graces and disgraces, our economic significance to the insurance broker, work for the undertaker...."⁵⁸ The insight into the *more* of our reality, Ramsey explains as our experience of "a sense of the permanent, a sense of what abides" in the midst of "the changes and chances of a fleeting world."⁵⁹

Similarly, Collins speaks of a depth-experience as the logic of the biblical eschatology. According to him

the important thing in this logic of eschatology is surely the attainment of the present depth-experience, of liberation in response to the demands of righteousness. If this is attained the manner in which it is mediated is of lesser importance. It is undoubtedly true that this depth-experience can be attained by some without a belief in the heavenly host, immortality of the soul or resurrection of the

57. E. Fromm, *To Have or To Be?* (London: Abacus, 1979), p. 124.

58. I. T. Ramsey, *Freedom and Immortality* (London: SCM Press, 1957), p. 65.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

body. It is also true that belief in an after life does not necessarily involve liberation, or the attainment of depth-experience.⁶⁰

Whitehead uses the concept of peace to describe the present depth-experience, which is also an experience of immortality. Peace for him is the "Harmony of Harmonies",⁶¹ a broadening of feeling due to the emergence of some deep metaphysical insight,⁶² resulting in a "surpassing of personality", and bringing forth as fruit "that passion whose existence Hume denied, the love of mankind as such".⁶³ One who has attained this peace is a wise man who "can face his fate, master of his soul".⁶⁴

Two points seem to emerge clearly from these considerations. First, we are immortal already as we live and with this realization we can live richer lives. This in a way is a true experience of salvation and liberation. Secondly, with this awareness we can face death without fear and trembling because we know that though we die we do not disappear in total oblivion; nor are we wiped away from the realm of reality, but are integrated into its aspect of permanence and value, as appraised and appreciated by the all-encompassing divine Being.

Objective immortality and Christian eschatology

I have attempted to develop the perspective of objective immortality, not just from the point of view of philosophy of religion, but more precisely from that of its relevance for Christian eschatology. Hence it has to be pointed out how this perspective of immortality is feasible and useful to re-interpret the eschatological vision of Christianity in order to aid towards the self-understanding of the Christian community today. In fact, for the same reason, the need to demythologize the eschatological assertion of the Bible is recognized by biblical scholars as well as theologians. And my contention is that the perse-

60. J. J. Collins, "Apocalyptic Eschatology as the Transcendence of Death", (CBQ 36/1, 1974), p. 42.

61. A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1933), p. 367.

62. Cf. *Ibid.*

63. *Ibid.*, p. 368.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 375.

ctive of objective immortality together with the world-understanding implied in it is a frame-work suited to accomplish this in a reasonable way, yet saving the valuable meanings and intent of those assertions.

In favour of the acceptability of objective immortality, at least as a more feasible and credible model, I have referred to Karl Rahner who seems to think along the same lines, though using other concepts. Now, Rahner is known to theologize within the frame-work of orthodoxy. Also the modern biblical scholarship turns in favour of objective immortality. Biblical studies are aware of the need of demythologizing the scriptures in order to save the religious meaning for the contemporary man and woman; for much of the world view and cosmology in which the biblical insights are expressed has become obsolete for us today. Thus we have, for example, learned to accept the theory of evolution in spite of the creation narrative of the book of Genesis. Although we do not any more subscribe to the literal meaning of the creation accounts of the Bible we recognize that the myths of creation, paradise, the fall of man, etc. are powerful symbols expressing some important insights concerning man's situation in the world.

Is not the same also true with regard to the biblical accounts of the "last things"? If, in fact, there was at the beginning of history no paradise which was lost through man's sin, there is no much meaning in speaking about its restoration at the end of history. There is a point, then, in considering the eschatological assertions as extrapolations from the present to the future, based on man's essential characteristic of transcendence which is an important dimension of his depth-experience in the present. From this point of view the Christian eschatology could be interpreted as basically affirming the value of the human person and history in the face of evil and death. Here the theory of objective immortality could aid theology to take a further step as required by the modern awareness of the cosmic reality, its interrelatedness and functioning.

Now, the important point of a perspective like that of objective immortality is that, though it does not deny the possibility of subjective immortality, it nevertheless does not consider an ongoing continuation of life after death necessary

in order to affirm the indestructible meaning and value of the individual human person and his transcendence over the transience of the present. Without positing an ongoingness of life, objective immortality can show that death is not a destruction, though it is the termination of temporal existence. Termination and loss are not the same. Thus there is a distinction between continuing actuality and retained effective reality. Here the answer to the problem of death is in terms of the retained reality; the reality of my being is everlasting through objective immortality, though the ongoingness of my subjectivity might end with death.

On the other hand, the difficulty of affirming the continuance of subjectivity beyond death is that then we have to affirm also process, becoming, freedom, decision, change, and growth as integral to this subjectivity, which in fact are denied to a *post-mortem* existence even in the traditional view of personal survival. In fact, there cannot be real subjective experience without also there being implied the process of becoming; and becoming generates time, and the person who is said to be beyond time through death, would be back again in time.

Are there not objections against a mere objective immortality? There are, of course, and chiefly for reasons from a religious point of view. Thus, for example, the objection against the adequacy of objective immortality from the point of view of ethics and morality. When we say that an ongoing life with the possibility of pleasant or painful experiences in heaven or hell is not necessary the invariable question to be faced is this: Then, why should one take all the troubles to lead a moral life doing good and avoiding evil? It is not easy to convince even educated people that one has to do good because it is good, and avoid evil because evil has to be avoided. People seem to be rather insensitive to the fact that one's good or evil deeds have far reaching significance for the process of reality as a whole. If there is no personal gain for oneself, one does not seem to find any motivation whatever! One reason why people react in this way may be due to the social and religious upbringing with its ego-centred individualism and over-emphasized moral consciousness supported by the promise of heaven and the threat of hell. The reward-or-punishment-scheme, though

certainly useful from an educational point of view, should nevertheless be overcome by a mature morality, which will be able to realize the good as good in itself, or avoid evil because it is evil, without reference to a reward or punishment. One cannot avoid remarking that some popular forms of Christianity still remain somewhat immature in this regard, which is another reason for its loss of credibility among the more educated men and women of our day.

Another objection to objective immortality is that without a personal survival, the problems of evil, sin and death are left unanswered. It is true that evil, sin and death are tragic aspects of our experience in the world, but one wonders whether they need to be so much over-emphasized as is done in the Judeo-Christian traditions. In fact Christianity needs a somewhat dark canvas to paint the figure of the Redeemer, as was done by Paul and after him the Fathers. But what would be the consequence to Christology, if man and the world are not in a state of condemnation due to an original sin, and therefore never separated from God and cut off from his persuasion and grace? We know today, that the biblical story of original sin is an explanatory myth, explaining the fact of sin and evil, in the categories of an ancient world-view and anthropology which presupposed that man was the lord over the world, that it was unjust for man to suffer, struggle and die, and that if in fact suffering and death existed, it was caused by sin.

A less anthropocentric world view can, in fact, take the problem of evil, sin and death seriously, and try to understand it in the total perspective of the cosmic process, instead of looking for a solution outside process. Tragedy, failure, deviation and ambiguity are all part of the world in process. For if becoming is a process of the realization of values, and if there is freedom and choice in every becoming, then, the same conditions that make the good possible, make also evil possible. A universe in movement cannot be free from error. Evil, then, is not a radical corruption of a perfect universe, it is a deviation from the aim, a refusal to advance; in short, evil is the element of recalcitrance in an advancing universe. Sin, which is the human form of evil, is man's deviation from, and distortion of, the aims set for him in the context of the totality of reality in general and human community in particular.

Thus, although evil is admitted as a reality, there are good reasons to hope that the universe may not be totally disrupted by evil resulting from freedom. Although one cannot rule out in itself the possibility of a total failure of process, one need not be so pessimistic as to share the view that evil is so fundamental a threat to the universe and man that only an on-going history on another level can save them. So too, death is understood as natural to man, and the threat of death is overcome not by positing an everlasting existence of a finite subject but by understanding and accepting it as integral to our being which is a finite becoming within the interrelatedness of a larger becoming supported by the graciousness of God.

Given the organic perspective of the universe and of God, therefore, there is no compelling reason why an-ongoing life *after* death should be necessary. Is it not enough that we are saved and we "survive" as what we are in God and in his purpose for the future? From the Christian point of view one could even object to the idea of a naive conception of personal survival. One such objection is that to a finite being like man one cannot attribute a never-ending ongoingness of life. Added to this, there is also a religious objection to a primitive conception of personal survival; it could be a self-assertion insisting tenaciously that my value should be experienced for ever by me if it is to be genuine, which implies in fact the subtle claim that value cannot exist apart from my experience of it. This is in a way making oneself equal to God. A third objection is that the belief in an other-worldly life tends to make religion an opium of the people and thus undermines the meaning and importance of this life.⁶⁵ An exaggerated otherworldliness would paralyze our efforts to collaborate in the building up of this world, though it is true that we have no lasting city in the midst of the on-going process. Holding to the belief in a personal "survival" and to an eschatological fulfilment from God, can Christianity be fully consistent in engaging itself seriously in the earthly concerns of mankind? In fact, it is rarely noticed that a statement like: "Neque enim Deus hominem ad haec fragilia et caduca sed ad caelestia atque aeterna generavit, terramque nobis

65. Cf. K. Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie, Einleitung" *Die Frühschriften*, S. Landshut ed. (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1971), p. 208.

ut exulandi locum, non ut sedem habitandi dedit",⁶⁶ could affect the seriousness of the social concern of Pope Leo XIII. This inconsistency is not fully overcome even in the much celebrated document of Vatican II: *Gaudium et Spes*.⁶⁷

Thus it is because we cannot entirely reduce the traditional talk of immortality to a disclosure model, that we need an alternate explanation for which we proposed the theory of objective immortality. Hence objective immortality has more to it than the disclosure story of Ramsey. Inasmuch as the doctrine of objective immortality is an approximation towards 'how things are' like the models of science. Even Ramsey is of the opinion that some stories or models have more disclosure possibilities than the others, thus implying that objectivity, or the way how things are, is a factor to be reckoned with in such talks. Ramsey also points out the need of complicating the inadequate models which are currently employed in the immortality-talk (for example, the talk in terms of a 'future life') to make them capable of yielding more disclosure possibilities.⁶⁸ Although objective immortality could be interpreted as precisely that complication needed today in the immortality-talk, it has to be repeated that objective immortality is more than just a model or a story to bring about a disclosure that the human being is *more* than his public behaviour and bio-chemical processes. For, the doctrine of objective immortality goes further and describes precisely this *more* in terms of 'how things are' and hence is a metaphysical category, not a disclosure story. In the last analysis, there is a fundamental weakness to such theories as that of Ramsey: they are somewhat forgetful of metaphysics; the disclosure occurs and there it stops. About the possibility of discoursing on the disclosure and arguing and conceptually articulating the meanings disclosed nothing further is said.⁶⁹ Here is also the basic difference between Rahner and Ramsey in the talk about life after death. Rahner uses metaphysical categories, whereas Ramsey seems to deliberately avoid

66. Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum: De operariorum Conditione* (Rome: Desclée et Socii, 1891), p. 13.

67. Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 18.

68. Cf. Ramsey, *Freedom and Immortality*, p. 119.

69. Cf. I. G. Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigms: The Nature of Scientific and Religious Language* (London: SCM Press, 1974), p. 60ff.

them.⁷⁰ That is why perhaps the perspective of objective immortality has more affinity with Rahner's thought than with Ramsey's.

Another difficulty with Ramsey is that his theory overlooks the fact that the traditional talk about immortality, with the varied images claims more than there is to models and stories meant to lead to disclosure: it claims to be descriptive of how things are. Rahner too seems to take refuge in some sort of a twist of perspective when it is the question of the meaning of the eschatological assertions. However, the fact that the basic insights or disclosures are valid need not justify such an approach. This can be elucidated by pointing, for example, to the geo-centric cosmology of the Middle Ages.⁷¹ The belief that the earth was the centre of the universe might have been based on the disclosure that man is the most dignified being in the universe. The point of the disclosure is certainly true, but unfortunately the connected cosmological theory is not. Now, isn't it more honest to the facts to admit this, than, if one were to try to justify geo-centrism converting it to a model or a story meant only to evoke the disclosure? Similarly, are not the immortality-talk and the eschatological assertions disclosures that man has a transcendental dimension to his being with the alleged assertions and descriptions of how things are? The disclosure is true and valuable, but the eschatological assertions need not be. Here we could remark that Rahner could be more critical in his attempt to interpret the eschatological assertions and say, perhaps, that the eschatological assertions go beyond their legitimate bounds in their claim to be the report of the future events. One needs perhaps other methods than the transcendental one in order to determine whether the eschatological assertions in fact ever trespassed beyond their logical limits and claimed unwarrantedly that they did describe 'how things are'. Now, to admit that the traditional eschatology did in fact step beyond its logical limits is not the same as to say that such talk has an "odd" logic.

Our claim in expounding the theory of objective immortality is a modest one: that it is perhaps a better approximation

70. Ramsey's neglect of metaphysics should be understood against the background of the anti-metaphysical climate of logical positivism in which he started his enterprise of meaningfully talking about God, the soul, immortality etc.

71. Cf. N. M. Wildiers, *Weltbild und Theologie*, pp. 60ff.

to 'how things are' than most of the traditional talk on immortality, in a somewhat similar way as the theory of evolution stands in more close approximation to truth than the biblical narrative of creation. In fact objective immortality could be thought of as a third possibility, when we consider the two extreme positions concerning the beliefs in a life after death. On the one side, there is the *advaita* perspective of Indian thought, according to which at death the soul is dissolved in Brahman, the Absolute. According to *advaita* philosophy, even in this life man and other beings do not have any real individuality or uniqueness, because multiplicity and distinction are less real (*maya*), and the result of *avidya*, ignorance. The *advaita* view as such is not acceptable because of its one sided emphasis on unity at the expense of multiplicity.

Now, on the other extreme are the beliefs in a continuation of life beyond death, as if it were only a matter of changing the horses and riding further. These beliefs too cannot be accepted as such on account of their naivity and primitiveness. We are left, therefore, with the third possibility which can be described in some such terms as objective immortality. In objective immortality, the individuality and uniqueness is saved and preserved for ever in God's being without requiring the continuation of the subjective experiences for ever. From this point of view, Rahner's attempt to demythologize the eschatological assertions could be seen as the search for a similar alternative.

Having said all this, there may still remain the doubt whether the theory of objective immortality can recuperate all the meanings of the traditional beliefs in life after death. As a matter of fact, it cannot, if we take also the details. But one has to ask whether all those meanings are necessary and true. That all the meanings of the theory of an eternal continuation of one's life are not necessary can be shown from the historical and anthropological studies⁷² as well as from the Bible itself. The anthropocentrism and the ego-consciousness found in some dominant cultures - and the cry for personal survival is a logical sequel to it - is after all not a universal phenomenon.

Thus we may say that all the meanings of the belief in a subjective survival are neither necessary nor desirable, though

72. M. Singleton, *art. cit.*, p. 28.

there could still exist a certain fear which often seems to accompany any major change of the reigning models. Was it not feared that the theory of evolution might not recuperate all the meanings of the creation theory, nor polygenism those of monogenism and helio-centrism those of geocentrism? The fear was indeed justified; the theories of evolution etc. could not recuperate all the meanings of the former theories. In fact, when the theory of evolution was proposed, it was a shock to theology, because it seemed to undermine the basic tenets of Christian faith, and the Church and theologians opposed it vehemently. But in spite of it the evolutionary perspective has survived and established itself. As a result the theologians were compelled to undertake a revision of those meanings contained in the traditional views, and have by now learned to accommodate themselves to an evolutionary perspective of the universe. Rahner, who once defended monogenism as essential to Christian faith,⁷³ did not hesitate to give up this position later.⁷⁴

Some centuries ago theology and faith had suffered an earlier shock, when it became clear that the stars and the other planets were also composed of corruptible matter as the planet earth, and that the earth, man's abode, was after all, not the centre of the universe. The impact of the modern physics and relativity theories is yet to be felt fully upon the theological mind, and when it would, it could be another shock. I feel that the theory of objective immortality as a more adequate description of the true immortality allotted to man can help theology overcome yet another shock.

Tervuursestr. 56
B - 3000 Leuven, Belgium

Abraham Koothottil

73. Cf. K. Rahner, "Theologisches zum Monogenismus", SchTh, I, (1954). pp. 253-322; cf. also *idem* "Monogenismus", LThk VII, 561-62.

74. Cf. *idem* "Monogenismus", *Sacramentum Mundi* III, pp. 594ff.

Our Contributors

Abraham Koothottil obtained a Doctorate in Theology with great distinction in 1979 from the Catholic University of Louvain and his dissertation is entitled: *Objective Immortality in Dipolar Theism: Towards a Process Eschatology based on the Thought of Alfred North Whitehead*.

Professor Jan Van der Veken (1932) teaches Philosophical Theology and Contemporary Thought and Christian Faith at the Catholic University of Louvain. Trained in Phenomenology, he wrote a doctoral dissertation on *The Absolute in the Philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty*. He was influential in introducing Process Philosophy in Belgium and in the Netherlands and is the first President of the European Society for Process Thought, created in 1978.

André Cloots is born in 1948. Since 1972 he is an assistant in Philosophy at the Campus Kortrijk of the Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium). He obtained his Ph. D. in Philosophy in 1978, with a thesis on *The Quest for the Ultimate in Process-Philosophy*. He spent the academic year 1974-75 as a CRB-Fellow at the Centre for Process Studies in Claremont, California. His articles on Process-Philosophy have appeared in several journals.

John Arakkal is a research assistant at the University of Saarland, Saarbrücken, West Germany.